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Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations system, a report on the implementation of the resolution in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to submit it to the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

The present report reproduces the replies of Governments and organs and agencies of the United Nations system to the request of the Secretary-General for information on the matter.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations system, a report on the implementation of the resolution in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to submit it to the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

2. Pursuant to that request, in a note verbale dated 4 April 2018, the Secretary-General invited Governments and organs and agencies of the United Nations system to provide any information they might wish to contribute to the preparation of the report. A further note verbale was sent on 4 June 2018.

3. The present report reproduces the replies from Governments and organs and agencies of the United Nations system that had been received as at 9 July 2018. Replies received after that date will be reproduced as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Afghanistan

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Government of Afghanistan has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation.

In that regard, the Government of Afghanistan voted in favour of the aforementioned resolution, as well as other resolutions on the same matter, and reaffirms its commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter.

Albania

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Republic of Albania, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, fully implements General Assembly resolution 72/4 and does not have or apply any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to the above-mentioned resolution.

Algeria

[Original: Arabic]
[15 May 2018]

Algeria reaffirms its solidarity with Cuba and the Cuban people, who for more than half a century have resisted the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on them by the United States of America. By its near-unanimous adoption of resolution 72/4 of 1 November 2017 on the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba, the General Assembly reaffirms, for the twenty-sixth time in succession, the justness of and the international community's support for that cause. Algeria considers the embargo imposed against Cuba to be a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with regard to the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation.

Algeria once again totally rejects the imposition of extraterritorial laws and decisions and all forms of unilateral and coercive measures, which hinder the realization of human rights and prevent peoples from achieving prosperity. It also takes this opportunity to reaffirm the urgent need for the full and unconditional lifting of the embargo that was imposed by the United States on Cuba in 1961 and which, aside from the considerable harm and suffering that it has caused to the people of Cuba, constitutes a major obstacle to the achievement of their economic and social development goals.

Moreover, Algeria considers that the rapprochement between Cuba and the United States, including the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the official visit by President Obama to Havana in 2016 and the subsequent abstention by the United States in the vote on General Assembly resolution 71/5 of 26 October 2016, constituted a series of positive and courageous steps on the path towards the total lifting of the embargo on Cuba. However, the measures announced recently by the Administration of President Donald Trump, including the policy of maintaining the embargo, represent a major setback for relations between those two countries that will have a grave impact on the economy and society of Cuba.

At a time when conditions are worsening at the regional and international levels, the demand to end the embargo imposed on Cuba takes on a particular urgency, especially given the implications it has for security and stability in the region. In that connection, Algeria wishes to recall the principled position adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at the seventeenth Ministerial Conference of its member States, held in Algiers in May 2014, calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. Algeria also recalls the position adopted at the seventeenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Venezuela in September 2016, calling for an unconditional end to the embargo.

Andorra

[Original: English]
[19 April 2018]

The Government of the Principality of Andorra has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". In that regard, the Government of the Principality of Andorra has always voted in favour of resolutions on the matter and reaffirms its commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Angola

[Original: English]
[24 May 2018]

The Republic of Angola reiterates the importance of ending the economic and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

The Republic of Angola profoundly regrets that the resumption of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States, which began in 2015, has been interrupted by the current United States Administration, which seriously compromises all subsequent measures aiming to end the blockade.

The Republic of Angola encourages the United States to build a relationship of dialogue and cooperation with Cuba, based on mutual respect.

The Republic of Angola reaffirms its commitment to respect, preserve and promote the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, as they constitute the essence of multilateralism and a collective effort to maintain peace and international security, economic growth and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In this context, the Republic of Angola reiterates its concern over the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba and expresses its desire for a final resolution that will bring the peoples of Cuba and the United States closer.

The Republic of Angola reiterates its unconditional support for the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 72/4, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States of America, and takes this opportunity to appeal once again to the international community to redouble its efforts to promote constructive and transparent dialogue between the two countries, with a view to achieving the objectives of all the resolutions already adopted by the General Assembly on the matter.

Antigua and Barbuda

[Original: English]
[25 May 2018]

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda remains fully committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, in particular, to the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda expresses its concern about the continued economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, despite the overwhelming support by Member States for General Assembly resolution 72/4, previous resolutions against the embargo and relevant international treaties.

Further, in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 72/4, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda continues to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to the aforementioned resolution, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation.

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2018]

The Government of the Argentine Republic has fully implemented the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and previous Assembly resolutions concerning the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

Act No. 24871, enacted on 5 September 1997, establishes the legislative framework governing the scope of application of foreign legislation within Argentina.

Article 1 of that Act provides that foreign legislation which, by imposing an economic embargo or restricting investment in a given country, purports to have extraterritorial legal effects in order to bring about a change of government in a country or to affect its right to self-determination shall be absolutely inapplicable and devoid of legal effects. The United States embargo against Cuba is regulated by federal legislation, in particular the Torricelli Act (Cuban Democracy Act) of October 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act (Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act) of March 1996.

In addition, Argentina is fully committed to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and multilateralism. Within that framework, since 1995, Argentina has supported the General Assembly resolutions concerning the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. It has also voiced opposition to the embargo at every opportunity, both in regional forums and in other international organizations.

The Argentine Government calls upon both Governments to deepen dialogue, which will make it possible to resolve all outstanding issues, including the lifting of the embargo.

In line with this position, Argentina supported the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the forty-first annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77, held in New York on 22 September 2017. Paragraph 203 reaffirms the call upon the Government of the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

Armenia

[Original: English]
[24 May 2018]

Armenia does not promulgate or apply any laws or regulations of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4, that could have a devastating influence on the economic and social development of Cuba.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia has, on a number of occasions, expressed its position against the policy of economic blockades and closed borders, being itself subject to continuing blockades by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Australia

[Original: English]
[22 May 2018]

The Government of Australia reaffirms its position in support of General Assembly resolution 72/4. Since 1996, the Government of Australia has consistently supported General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the trade embargo on Cuba. Australia has no sanctions or measures against Cuba that restrict trade or investment.

Azerbaijan

[Original: English]
[1 May 2018]

The Republic of Azerbaijan firmly upholds the norms and principles of international law in its foreign policy.

The Republic of Azerbaijan enjoys friendly diplomatic, economic and trade relations with the Republic of Cuba. Azerbaijan has not promulgated or applied laws or measures against Cuba that would prohibit economic, trade or financial relations between Azerbaijan and Cuba. Azerbaijan will continue to take appropriate measures to strengthen cooperation and develop friendly relations with Cuba.

Bahamas

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas enjoys normal diplomatic and trade relations with the Republic of Cuba.

The Bahamas has not promulgated or applied laws or measures against Cuba that would prohibit economic, commercial or financial relations between the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and the Republic of Cuba.

In this context, the Bahamas recalls and affirms the position of regional and interregional bodies, such as the Caribbean Community, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Bahamas remains hopeful for a process towards normal bilateral relations between the Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba.

Bahrain

[Original: Arabic]
[1 June 2018]

The Kingdom of Bahrain, in keeping with the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, has consistently supported the General Assembly resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, and reaffirms its support for resolution 72/4, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2017.

Bangladesh

[Original: English]
[9 July 2018]

The Government of Bangladesh has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4. Bangladesh has consistently supported previous resolutions on this item in the Assembly and also voted in favour of the aforementioned resolution.

Barbados

[Original: English]
[17 May 2018]

Barbados has consistently voted in favour of the resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba since it was first introduced in the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, in 1991.

Barbados reiterates its support for the most recent resolution on the issue, resolution 72/4, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2017, and reaffirms its full implementation at the national level since Barbados has no laws that in any way restrict freedom of trade and navigation with Cuba.

Barbados welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Governments of Cuba and the United States of America and encourages both parties to continue dialogue on the lifting of the embargo.

Belarus

[Original: Russian]
[4 May 2018]

Belarus believes that the imposition of economic and other unilateral coercive measures is self-defeating, contrary to the principles of international law and impedes the full enjoyment of human rights in countries subject to arbitrary sanctions. The more than half-century long commercial, economic and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States of America is a clear example of the counterproductive nature of such measures.

The embargo is especially harmful to the citizens of Cuba because it limits the ability of the Cuban State to ensure a decent standard of living for Cubans.

Belarus is convinced that all States Members of the United Nations must unequivocally respect the Cuban people's right to choose a system of governance and a socio-political model without outside interference.

In that context, Belarus reaffirms its solidarity with Cuba and expresses its support for resolution 72/4 and previous General Assembly resolutions on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

Belize

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Belize reaffirms its absolute commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including, in particular, the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation, which are also the fundamental principles of international law. In strict observance of the Charter and of international law, Belize has consistently supported the resolutions denouncing the embargo against Cuba and rejects the extraterritorial application of laws and measures. The ongoing attempt to isolate Cuba, in disregard of the annually adopted resolutions, which enjoy the overwhelming support of States Members of the United Nations, is a flagrant affront to multilateralism and the political will of the international community.

Belize and Cuba maintain a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership which has yielded concrete benefits for all our peoples. Belize's policy of engagement is further enhanced through regional cooperation between the Caribbean Community and Cuba.

Benin

[Original: French]
[30 May 2018]

In keeping with both the values it holds dearly, which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and the fundamental principles of international law, Benin participated actively in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/4 on 1 November 2017 concerning the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba.

Benin believes deeply in international solidarity and the virtues of dialogue as appropriate means of settling disputes and restoring trust among States, for the happiness of all peoples.

It supported all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba, which has profound socioeconomic consequences. The situation that Cuba has endured over the past few decades has prevented the country from obtaining adequate supplies of medicine and participating fully in international trade.

The Government of Benin, which has not promulgated or applied any laws or regulations of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4, has always advocated the rapid and unconditional lifting of the unilateral measures against Cuba, to enable that country to realize its social and economic development.

Benin welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States in July 2015 and reiterates its hope that the United States administration will work with the Congress to lift the embargo completely and unconditionally.

Benin will continue to encourage and support all actions designed to promote dialogue between Cuba and the United States, in the hope that bilateral relations between the two countries will be normalized once and for all, for the happiness and prosperity of the Cuban and American people.

Bhutan

[Original: English]
[2 May 2018]

The Royal Government of Bhutan has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4 and has consistently supported the aforementioned resolution and other resolutions on this matter in the Assembly and voted in favour thereof.

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2018]

The Plurinational State of Bolivia stresses the need to lift, immediately, the genocidal, inhumane and unjust embargo imposed by the United States of America on the Republic of Cuba, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. At the same time, Bolivia strongly condemns the continued use of such unilateral measures, which are contrary to international law, in a world where multilateralism and full respect for the sovereignty of States should prevail.

The embargo against Cuba

For over half a century, the United States Government has been imposing an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba that is outside of international law, the sole purpose of which is to cause material shortages, disease and unrest among the Cuban people and overthrow the Cuban Government through isolation and economic suffocation.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo is defined by a series of United States laws that have been enacted over several decades, since a total embargo on trade with Cuba was declared on 3 February 1962 through Presidential Executive Order No. 3447.

In 1992 the Cuban Democracy Act was adopted, which gave legislative force to all embargo regulations. This Act, also known as the Torricelli Act, prohibits not only United States companies, but also their subsidiaries in third countries, from trading with Cuban companies. In addition, it prohibits any merchant ship from entering United States territories until six months have elapsed since it last docked in Cuban ports, creating significant difficulties for Cuban maritime trade.

During the term of office of President Bill Clinton, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (Helms-Burton Act) of 1996 was adopted, which establishes, inter alia, sanctions for directors of foreign companies that conduct transactions involving United States property that was nationalized in Cuba, and contains provisions for the filing of cases in United States courts, fostering internal subversion.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States Government against Cuba is not only the longest in world history, but it is also the expression of a cruel and inhumane international policy which is devoid of legality and legitimacy and which demonstrates a total disregard for United Nations resolutions.

In recent years, we witnessed the rapprochement between the Cuban Government and the Obama Administration in pursuit of the "normalization of relations" which led, for the first time in history, to an explicit statement by the United States regarding an end to the embargo and the renewal of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

In that context, relations between the two countries improved. The first steps included the reopening of embassies and the removal of Cuba from the list of State sponsors of terrorism. Direct mail services between the two countries were restored; regular direct flights between the two countries were re-established; collaboration on port security resumed; a memorandum of understanding on the security of maritime navigation was signed; and regulatory changes were made by the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Trade that, inter alia, promote greater involvement of United States telecommunications and Internet companies in Cuba to improve connectivity and access to information by Cubans.

Despite the measures taken, the laws and regulations that maintain the embargo are still in force and are implemented by United States Government agencies, especially by the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Trade and the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Exports of Cuban products to the United States are still prohibited, inter alia, and exports from the United States to Cuba are not increasing. For its part, the United States Congress has not approved any of the 20 amendments or legislative initiatives that, with bipartisan support, have proposed eliminating some of the embargo's restrictions. The situation has been aggravated by the introduction of more than

50 legislative initiatives that threaten to reinforce basic aspects of the embargo and to prevent the President from issuing new executive orders or from implementing those already adopted. Furthermore, the legal ban on United States citizens travelling freely to Cuba remains in force. Nor has Cuba been able to make payments or cash deposits in United States dollars in its international transactions, as authorized by the United States Department of the Treasury, owing to the fines and the deterrent effects of the embargo.

The United States Government, far from ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against the Republic of Cuba, has maintained the laws, provisions and practices that support it. It has continued to strengthen its political, administrative and repressive mechanisms to ensure more effective and targeted implementation.

The consequences of the embargo against Cuba

The embargo has a negative impact in all economic, social and cultural areas, severely limiting the right to development of Cuba. In strictly economic terms, it is estimated that there has been a loss of at least $130,178.6 million over 58 years of embargo.

Various sectors have been affected by the embargo. The public health sector has suffered losses in the millions as a result of the inability to purchase, from United States markets, the medicines, reagents, spare parts for diagnostic and treatment equipment, medical instruments and other supplies necessary for this sector. In the food and agriculture sector the damage is reflected in higher prices for agricultural seed, fertilizers, spare parts for agricultural equipment and other inputs on the geographically distant markets where they must be purchased as they cannot be purchased on the United States market. The tourism industry in Cuba has also reported substantial damage as a result of the limitations and prohibitions caused by the embargo.

An area of great concern is the extraterritorial dimension of the embargo, the effects of which are not limited to the Republic of Cuba alone; on the contrary, the impact extends to other countries, complicating trade and cooperation relations that States wish to establish in a sovereign manner.

The sanctions and persecution of citizens, institutions and companies in third countries which establish, or intend to establish, economic, commercial, financial or scientific and technical relations with Cuba have been strengthened, granting the United States Government the right to decide on matters that fall under the sovereignty of other States.

The imposition of fines amounting to millions on United States and foreign banking institutions for conducting transactions with our country is a common practice of the United States Government. Such sanctions have a deterrent effect, and in the case of banks, lead to the severing of ties with Cuba and/or Cuban transactions have to be carried out in precarious conditions.

The main pillars of the extraterritoriality policy are as follows:

- United States subsidiaries in third countries are banned from carrying out any kind of transaction with companies in Cuba.
- Third-country companies are banned from exporting goods made in Cuba or goods manufactured with any Cuban component to the United States.
- Third-country companies are banned from selling goods or services to Cuba if more than 10 per cent of their technology consists of United States components, even if their owners are third-country nationals.

- Vessels transporting goods from or to Cuba, regardless of the flag State, are banned from entering United States ports.
- Third-country banks are banned from opening United States dollar-denominated accounts for Cuban natural or legal persons or from conducting financial transactions in United States dollars with Cuban entities or individuals.
- Third-country business people who have investments in or conduct business with Cuba are penalized with the denial of United States visas, which is extended to their family members. They are even subject to legal action in United States courts if their transactions with Cuba involve property related to claims by United States citizens or Cuban born individuals who subsequently acquired United States citizenship.

The embargo and the United Nations

The vast majority of countries at the General Assembly have expressed their opposition to the embargo. Thus, since 1992, 26 votes have been held without interruption, and a broad majority of countries has expressed their opposition to this aggression against the Cuban people.

Only the United States, Israel and some other allies, never more than four countries, have opposed this comprehensive condemnation, compared with the enormous support received by Cuba. Unfortunately, these General Assembly resolutions have had no effect on the position of the United States Government, which has demonstrated total disregard for the international community.

Bolivian position regarding the embargo against Cuba

The Bolivian Government firmly condemns and rejects any unilateral, unjust or illegal actions or measures taken by the United States against the Cuban people and Government. For over half a century, the United States has attempted, but failed, to crush the will of the Cuban people through a persistent and targeted economic, commercial and financial embargo.

Although the United States has not achieved its goals with its coercive measures, it has for a number of decades inflicted economic hardship on the long-suffering Cuban people and has caused substantial economic damage to the country, impeding its full development. In these circumstances, the Cuban people have always responded with dignity and with actions of solidarity towards all countries and peoples of the world, and not with the immorality with which they have been treated by the United States.

This embargo is a flagrant, systematic and widespread violation of the human rights of the Cuban people. It is a criminal act and amounts to an act of genocide according to article II of the Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948; it also amounts to an act of economic warfare, according to the Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War, adopted in 1909.

When the human rights of a people are being systematically violated to the point of genocide, when international law is being continuously contravened in respect of international norms of trade, the freedom of navigation and international humanitarian law, the international community cannot remain silent. The United States embargo against Cuba is not a bilateral issue. The embargo is an act of unilateral aggression by the United States that violates the foundations, principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

The disregard and disrespect of the United States for the opinion of the international community concerning the embargo against Cuba, which has been expressed through repeated General Assembly resolutions in which the United States embargo is almost unanimously rejected, demonstrates the double standards of that country with regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the peoples of the world.

Moreover, the Plurinational State of Bolivia has economic cooperation and complementarity agreements with the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America — Peoples' Trade Agreement (Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela, inter alia), which facilitate their commercial relations with the Republic of Cuba.

Bilateral relations between Bolivia and Cuba are based on the principles of justice and the unity of the peoples of our America, with the aim of expanding their participation in the international economy and strengthening their cooperation and trade. Economic Complementarity Agreement No. 47 of 4 February 2009, which is in force and fully applicable, provides for market access facilities and complete trade liberalization, in what has been termed fair trade for our peoples.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia acknowledges and expresses particular appreciation for the efforts of Cuba in its cooperation in solidarity with Bolivia, notably in education and health. This has shown that the solidarity of the Cuban people goes beyond the material limitations imposed by the embargo and the attempts to isolate their country.

In various international forums, the Plurinational State of Bolivia has unconditionally supported resolutions and declarations expressing rejection of the embargo against Cuba. At the Seventh Summit of the Americas, held in Panama on 10 and 11 April 2015, President Evo Morales reaffirmed his support for Cuba and said that the United States, in addition to lifting the unjust embargo, should compensate Cuba for all of the harm it had caused Cuba over the past 50 years.

In its Special Declaration adopted on 28 January 2016, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) reiterated its "strongest rejection of economic coercive measures not supported by international law, including all those unilateral actions imposed on sovereign countries for political reasons that impair the well-being of their peoples and are designed to prevent these countries from exercising their right to decide, by their own free will, their political, economic and social systems".

As a member of CELAC, Bolivia welcomes "the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Governments of Cuba and the United States of America, the opening of their respective embassies and other initiatives taken to further bilateral ties", and, during the presidency of President Obama, had urged him to take all actions within his executive powers to substantially modify the application of the embargo against Cuba, and had requested the United States Congress to proceed with its elimination.

During the forty-third regular meeting of the Latin American Council of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), held in the city of Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, from 28 to 30 November 2017, a declaration was issued during a ministerial session on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, indicating that the United States embargo affects not just a SELA member State, but also the international community, as it imposes rules and regulations on the international community in relation to its economic relations with Cuba.

Bolivia strongly condemns the application of any law or measure that is contrary to international law, such as the Helms-Burton Act, and therefore urges the United States Government to end its implementation. It also calls upon the United States

Government to comply with the successive resolutions of the General Assembly and to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Against this background, Bolivia joins in solidarity with and fully endorses the self-determination of the Cuban people and the exercise of their sovereign right to live in accordance with the political system established by the people.

Bolivia will continue to express its consistent support at subsequent sessions of the General Assembly by voting in favour of the resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, until the United States has ceased its harassment of the island.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Republic of Cuba have taken the sovereign decision to establish and strengthen their political, economic, social and cultural relations.

Bolivia firmly states that the United States embargo against the Republic of Cuba must be ended unconditionally, unilaterally and immediately.

Compliance with General Assembly resolution 72/4 of 1 November 2017

On paragraphs 2 and 3

The Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia has not adopted any laws or measures that are contrary to the spirit of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and would infringe on the freedom of trade or navigation, and regrets that other States have resorted to this illegal, harmful and inhumane practice in violation of international law.

With reference to paragraph 4

The Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with this paragraph, to continue to report on the implementation of this resolution by all States Members of the United Nations. In the resolution, it is suggested that they refrain from applying laws and measures relating to an economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on any country, and in particular the genocidal embargo that exists against the Republic of Cuba, as it not only violates the sovereignty of that State but also the sovereignty of all other States of the international community.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

Bosnia and Herzegovina, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, supported General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has never promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in resolution 72/4 and is ready to develop cooperation with Cuba at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

Botswana

[Original: English]
[8 May 2018]

The Republic of Botswana has never promulgated, applied or enforced any laws and measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4, nor does it intend to. As reflected by its vote on the resolution, Botswana is opposed to the continued adoption and application of such extraterritorial measures, and in this respect, supports the immediate lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Brazil

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

Brazil reiterates its firm opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, as well as to the extraterritorial application of discriminatory domestic trade laws.

Brazil condemns the embargo and for decades has been advocating with the Government of the United States of America for the normalization of relations with Cuba. The rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba since 1962 is a virtual international consensus. It is illustrated by the fact that the most recent General Assembly resolution on the matter, 72/4, was adopted by 191 votes in favour and only two votes against it.

Intensifying economic relations with Cuba is the correct path that should be followed by all countries interested in supporting the development of the island and the improvement of the living conditions of millions of Cuban citizens. The embargo harms the Cuban people, mainly the poorest ones, who suffer the impact of such unilateral measures through economic uncertainty and unemployment.

Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]
[23 April 2018]

Brunei Darussalam reaffirms its support for all General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. Brunei Darussalam rejects the use of unilateral sanctions, as they negatively affect the economic and social development of Member States. More importantly, unilateral sanctions contradict international law and the Charter of the United Nations. On that basis, Brunei Darussalam has not introduced or applied any laws or measures inconsistent with General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Burkina Faso

[Original: French]
[31 May 2018]

The Government of Burkina Faso considers the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba to be not only contrary to the purposes, principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, but also a violation of the fundamental norms of international law, international humanitarian law, international trade law and human rights.

Consequently, Burkina Faso has always voted in favour of the resolutions on this issue. Condemning the continuation of the embargo after the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Burkina Faso reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, and freedom of international trade and navigation, which form the fundamental principles of international law.

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Burkina Faso has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble of General Assembly resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017.

Burkina Faso, which believes in the virtues of dialogue and negotiation, reiterates its wish for the embargo to be lifted and urges the two parties concerned to continue working towards a peaceful settlement of the dispute, in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Burundi

[Original: French]
[7 May 2018]

The position of the Government of Burundi has always been to oppose this embargo, which is inconsistent with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. Burundi has never applied this embargo and does not intend to apply it in the future.

Cabo Verde

[Original: English]
[17 April 2018]

The Republic of Cabo Verde, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the National Constitution and in conformity with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which promotes solidarity, cooperation and friendly relations among countries and nations, has never promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", adopted on 1 November 2017.

Cabo Verde, which has always voted in favour of lifting the embargo, maintains excellent relations of friendship and cooperation with Cuba.

Cambodia

[Original: English]
[8 May 2018]

With reference to General Assembly resolution 72/4, the Royal Government of Cambodia would like to reiterate its firm position to urge the United States of America to respect international law and the consecutive United Nations resolutions by unconditionally putting a complete end to the unjustified sanctions against Cuba. The economic and social progress of the Cuban people should not be hindered by the illegal sanctions and the inflicted suffering should be terminated.

The Royal Government of Cambodia wishes to call for the full respect and implementation of the above-mentioned resolution by all Member States.

Cameroon

[Original: French]
[30 May 2018]

Cameroon is committed to respecting the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of trade, which are enshrined in many international legal instruments.

In the implementation of resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2017, as well as previous resolutions on the matter, and in accordance with the above-mentioned principles, Cameroon has never adopted legislative or other measures with a view to strengthening or expanding the embargo imposed on Cuba.

Cameroon has always voted in favour of lifting the embargo and maintains excellent relations of friendship and cooperation with Cuba.

Canada

[Original: English]
[14 June 2018]

The Government of Canada reconfirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4. Canadian law states that no Canadian corporation shall, in respect of any trade or commerce between Canada and Cuba, comply with an extraterritorial measure of the kind referred to in the resolution. Canada encourages the United States and Cuba, our neighbours, to fully normalize the bilateral relations and hopes that this process will bring about the end of the embargo against Cuba.

Central African Republic

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba has caused tremendous harm to the Government and people of Cuba in all spheres of activity. The embargo has long been denounced and the General Assembly has adopted several resolutions against it, the most recent of which was resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017 by 191 votes. While everyone was expecting the embargo to be completely lifted after the process towards the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries was announced on 17 December 2014, it should be noted that the embargo remains in place.

Mindful of its commitments to the international community and in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Government of the Central African Republic considers this embargo to be contrary to international law in general and international humanitarian law in particular. Furthermore, the Government of the Central African Republic will continue to support the Government of Cuba until the embargo has been completely lifted and calls on the United States Government to act in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding international cooperation and solidarity and good-neighbourly relations.

Chad

[Original: French]
[4 April 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Chad welcomes the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The embargo is clearly still in place, seriously penalizing the Cuban people and undermining the country's economic development.

While reiterating the calls from Member States and international organizations, including the African Union, for the complete lifting of the embargo, the Government of Chad, referring also to paragraph 30 of resolution 70/1 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, calls on States to avoid adopting or applying unilateral economic, financial or commercial measures that are inconsistent with international law or the Charter of the United Nations and that prevent the full realization of economic and social development, especially in developing countries.

The Government of the Republic of Chad urges the Governments of the United States and Cuba to continue their dialogue and the rekindling of the process embarked upon, for development that will benefit the people of the two countries and the world as a whole.

Chile

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2018]

Chile wishes to report that it has not approved any measures aimed at restricting normal trade and economic relations between Chile and Cuba. Chile supports the full and free exercise of the right to trade and to establish business relations in the international arena, with no restrictions other than those corresponding to activities classified as illegal under Chilean law and the restrictions imposed by the international community in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

China

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

For 26 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority, resolutions calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States and urging all countries to comply with the rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and to repeal or nullify any laws and measures whose extraterritorial effects encroach upon the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities and individuals within their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, over the years there has been no effective implementation of the resolutions and the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba has yet to be lifted. Not only is this contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, it has also caused immense economic and financial losses to Cuba, has hindered efforts by the Cuban people to eradicate poverty, to promote their economic and social development and to attain the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has impaired the right to survival and the right to development of the Cuban people and has also disrupted the normal economic, commercial and financial relations between Cuba and other countries.

China has always advocated respect for the right of countries to choose their own social system and path of development independently, and has opposed the imposition by military, political, economic or any other means of unilateral sanctions on other countries. China has always strictly abided by and implemented the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. China and Cuba maintain sound economic and trade relations and conduct personnel exchanges, and the mutually beneficial and friendly cooperation between the two countries in various areas continues to grow. This is in line with the aspirations of the people of both countries, and is also conducive to the economic and social development of Cuba.

Against the backdrop of today's multipolar world, economic globalization, cultural diversity and the democratization of international relations, there is a growing trend towards communication and cooperation on an equal footing between countries. When differences arise between countries, equal dialogue and friendly consultation offer the best means of reaching a settlement. China notes that the United States has taken measures to lift restrictions on Cuba in the field of commerce and trade, while many limitations still remain. China hopes that the United States and Cuba will continue the process of normalization of relations, and calls upon the United States to lift its embargo against Cuba fully and as soon as possible, and to develop normal inter-State relations with Cuba in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the basic norms governing international relations. This is in line with the shared interests of the United States and Cuba and of the people of those two countries, and will be beneficial to peace and stability throughout the Americas.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[1 June 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Colombia, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, reiterates that it has neither promulgated nor applied any unilateral laws or measures against Cuba or any other Member State, in keeping with its policy of respect for international law and its commitment to the principles of political independence, self-determination of peoples, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

Consequently, Colombia promotes the independent development of the internal policies of every nation and believes that any measure that undermines economic and commercial development and the well-being of the population should cease.

Comoros

[Original: French]
[26 April 2018]

The Government of the Union of the Comoros reaffirms its commitment to its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and respect for international law. For that reason, it has not enacted or applied any laws or regulations with extraterritorial effects which could affect the sovereignty of other States.

The Government of the Union of the Comoros takes note of the measures taken in 2017 by the Administration of the United States of America, which impede the process previously undertaken aimed at normalizing relations between Cuba and the United States.

To ensure that dialogue is revived and the process of normalization continues, the Government of the Union of the Comoros supports the immediate lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba unilaterally. This measure would serve the interests of the affected countries and their peoples and would promote the development of their relations in all these sectors.

Congo

[Original: French]
[8 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of the Congo, which is committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, condemns the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba.

The Congolese Government, which acts in line with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/4, supports the lifting of the embargo, which is vital to eliminate the barriers hindering the development of the Cuban economy, provide relief for the Cuban people and promote exchanges of various types between the peoples of the two States concerned.

To that end, the Congolese Government calls on the Government of the United States to foster constructive dialogue with Cuba and to develop, together with the Cuban Government, good-neighbourly relations, at a time when the international community is working on peacebuilding and sustaining peace as an undeniable enabler of sustainable development.

Costa Rica

[Original: Spanish]
[3 July 2018]

Costa Rica reaffirms its absolute commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in keeping with its policy of peace, global prosperity and the strict observance of international law.

Accordingly, it reiterates its longstanding support for the resolution presented annually by Cuba to the General Assembly on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America.

We confirm, once again, that the authorities of Costa Rica have neither promulgated nor applied any national law, policy or measure with extraterritorial effects that could affect the sovereignty of other States or the freedom of trade and navigation, in line with their consistent compliance with their obligations under the Charter and in accordance with international law and General Assembly resolution 72/4.

To that end, Costa Rica has consistently stressed, at both the regional and international levels, the need to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba, because it believes that, after so many decades, it is the people of Cuba who have suffered the most.

In that vein, Costa Rica reiterates once again its strong opposition to the current unilateral policy imposed on Cuba through the Helms-Burton Act, which constitutes a real obstacle to international trade.

Costa Rica is firmly convinced that it is only through dialogue, multilateral mechanisms and international law that differences between countries should be addressed. It therefore reiterates its total rejection of unilateral and extraterritorial measures applied by any State against another through the imposition of its own laws and legal system.

In that regard, Costa Rica stated during the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly that unilateral economic sanctions are ineffective as a means of punishing Governments but can seriously undermine the rights of peoples to well-being and development, and expressed its opposition to the embargo that the United States has imposed on Cuba for 55 years, with high human, economic and social costs for the Cuban people.

Similarly, Costa Rica reiterates that any type of political, economic or military sanction imposed on States must result from a decision or recommendation made by the Security Council or General Assembly.

Costa Rica also considers it indispensable that Member States make progress in strengthening ties of cooperation and friendship based on multilateralism and the other provisions enshrined in Chapter I of the Charter. In that spirit, Costa Rica reiterates the importance of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba and believes that the time has come to pay greater attention to the international community's repeated and near-unanimous calls for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba, with the aim of making progress in the full normalization of ties between the two countries.

For their part, Costa Rica and Cuba have been strengthening their ties of friendship and cooperation since diplomatic relations were restored in 2009. In particular, cooperation between the two countries has been developed under a framework agreement on the matter and through bilateral agreements in specific areas of mutual interest, such as foreign trade, culture, sport, education, technical and scientific exchange, health care and the environment.

During the reporting period, a migration convention, which had been agreed upon at the previous political dialogue meeting, held in March 2017, was signed by the Governments of Costa Rica and Cuba on 23 April 2018.

Côte d'Ivoire

[Original: French]
[25 May 2018]

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the sovereign equality of States and freedom of trade and navigation, which form the fundamental principles of international law.

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire has never promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4 and has no intention of doing so.

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, true to its ideals of peace and dialogue in the relations among States, reaffirms its readiness to work with the entire international community to find appropriate solutions to this issue and encourages the parties concerned to focus on negotiation efforts and dialogue for successful settlement of the dispute, especially since the United States has an embassy in Cuba.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[9 July 2018]

Introduction

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba for nearly six decades is the most unjust, severe and prolonged system of unilateral sanctions applied against any country. From April 2017 to March 2018, the period covered by this report, the embargo policy has intensified and continues to be applied rigorously.

The United States Government seriously set back bilateral relations with Cuba on 16 June 2017, when President Donald Trump signed the "National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba", which endorsed among its objectives the tightening of the embargo against the island. In November of the same year, the United States Departments of Commerce, the Treasury and State issued new regulations and provisions to implement the memorandum.

Those measures further restricted the right of United States citizens to travel to Cuba and imposed additional constraints on the limited opportunities of the United States business sector in Cuba by establishing a list of 179 Cuban entities with which United States institutions and natural or legal persons are prohibited from conducting transactions.

The new sanctions against Cuba have resulted in a significant decrease in the number of visits from the United States and have raised greater obstacles to economic and trade relations between Cuban companies and potential partners in the United States and third countries. These measures affect not only the Cuban State economy, but also the country's non-State sector.

The strengthening of the extraterritorial application of the embargo has been another distinctive manifestation of the tightening of this policy, with a marked impact on Cuban international financial and credit relations.

In recent months, the constant persecution of Cuban financial transactions and of credit and banking operations involving Cuba has intensified on a global scale. This has caused serious damage to the country's economy, in particular the business activities of domestic companies and banks in their links with international banking.

The tightening of the embargo against Cuba has been accompanied by an aggressive, threatening and disrespectful rhetoric of conditions from the highest levels of the United States Government, which has generated greater mistrust and uncertainty in United States financial institutions, companies and suppliers owing to the real fear of being penalized for doing business with Cuba.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is the main obstacle to the development of the full potential of the Cuban economy. It hinders implementation not only of the country's national economic and social development plan but also of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is the main obstacle to the development of the economic, commercial and financial relations of Cuba with the United States and, owing to its extraterritorial nature, the rest of the world.

The accumulated losses caused by the embargo during the nearly six decades it has been in place amount to $933,678,000,000, taking into account the depreciation of the dollar against the price of gold on the international market. At current prices, the embargo has caused quantifiable losses of more than $134,499,800,000.

During the period covered by this report, the embargo has caused Cuba losses of approximately $4,321,200,000.

This policy of economic aggression, together with the promotion of internal subversion, confirms that the United States Government aims to destroy the economic, political and social system freely chosen by the Cuban people.

The embargo is a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans and qualifies as an act of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, of 1948. It violates the Charter of the United Nations and international law and poses an obstacle to international cooperation.

It is imperative that the United States comply with the 26 resolutions adopted by the international community in the General Assembly and that it unconditionally end its embargo policy.

I. Continuity of the embargo policy

1.1 New measures taken by the current United States Government to tighten the embargo

The start of Donald Trump's presidency was the beginning of a process of setting back bilateral relations and tightening the embargo against Cuba. President Barack Obama's amendments to the regulations on the application of the embargo and his position in favour of eliminating the policy were drastically reversed by the current Government. The decisions made by President Trump, preceded by negative messages and statements during his electoral campaign, resulted in a process to review completely the policy towards Cuba, ordered by the executive branch in February 2017.

On 16 June 2017, President Trump signed the "National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba" in Miami, repealing the Directive entitled "United States-Cuba Normalization", issued by President Obama on 14 October 2016. As a result, there was a significant and distinctly negative change in United States policy towards Cuba. The United States returned to a strategy of intensification of the embargo and of subversion against Cuba.

On 8 November 2017, the United States Departments of Commerce, the Treasury and State issued new regulations and provisions to implement the Presidential Memorandum of 16 June 2017. Travel restrictions were imposed under the people-to-people category, one of the exceptions most commonly used by United States citizens to visit Cuba, and constraints related to educational travel were added. This has led to a fall in the number of travellers from the United States in 2018, including visits by members of academic institutions and thousands of university students. These legal provisions have resulted in additional damage to the Cuban economy, including the economic activity of tens of thousands of self-employed workers and families in Cuba.

On the same date, the Department of State issued a "List of Restricted Entities and Subentities Associated with Cuba", which included 179 companies. The objective of this list is to continue to hinder the economic and commercial relations of Cuban companies with potential partners in the United States and third countries. The list is also intended to limit opportunities for Cuban businesses with the rest of the world, because many foreign counterparts have concluded that they cannot do business or continue to work with the companies on the list. The extraterritorial impact has been significant in 2018, because confusion has arisen in relation to the Specially

Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Many companies from third countries that have traditionally exported goods and materials that are essential for the Cuban economy are refusing to act as suppliers or are encountering additional difficulties in financing exports to Cuba. This extraterritorial effect costs tens of millions of dollars and results in delayed supplies, a shortage of raw materials and severe damage to manufacturing production in the country.

The extraterritorial effect of these discriminatory procedures will continue to affect the economic development of Cuba and opportunities for its companies by increasing the international business community's fear of establishing ties and doing business with the island.

The setting back of bilateral ties and the tightening of the United States embargo have increased the persecution of Cuban financial transactions on a global scale. This has done untold damage to the Cuban economy, in particular the business activities of companies and links between Cuban and international banks. In 2018, dozens of banks in all regions of the world decided to end their relations with Cuban companies or foreign companies in Cuba to eliminate any link between their activities and Cuba, including, on the sole basis of nationality, operations related to Cuban citizens.

Another group of banks and institutions in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia has imposed conditions on and raised barriers to further operations with Cuban companies and embassies that have been their clients for years. The main damage resulting from this intimidating effect includes the ban on transfers of funds in United States dollars or other freely convertible currencies; the closure of the accounts of embassies and companies with Cuban interests abroad and the cancellation of financial services for businesses with ties to Cuba; and the refusal to provide credit facilities or process letters of credit. The financial straitjacket on Cuba has been tightened. This is a result of the monitoring and control mechanisms imposed by the United States on international banking activity and a direct consequence of the million-dollar fines imposed on foreign banks in recent years.

President Trump's policy of economic and financial harassment is intended to honour his political commitments to the anti-Cuban extreme right wing in the State of Florida and ignores the majority support of United States public opinion, the international community and Cuban émigrés in the United States for the lifting of the embargo and the normalization of relations between the two countries.

On the grounds of medical symptoms reported by a group of diplomats at the United States Embassy in Cuba, the United States Government took the unjustified step of issuing a travel alert recommending that potential visitors reconsider their intention of travelling to Cuba. This measure has resulted in a significant decline in the number of visitors from the United States, who are reluctant to travel, among other reasons, because insurance agencies take travel alerts seriously.

The implementation of this measure has had a negative impact on the emerging non-State sector, for which the market of United States visitors was the main source of customers, revenue and development. This step by the United States Government was imposed without any evidence of actual harm to persons associated with Cuba; and without any of the 5 million visitors a year having reported symptoms of any kind.

Using the same pretext, the United States Government unilaterally and without any justification demanded the withdrawal of a large number of diplomatic officials from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C. They included the staff of the economic and commercial office, responsible for exploring opportunities and avenues for trade within the extremely narrow framework of licences and exceptions to the embargo established by the United States Government. The impact is an additional blow to limited bilateral trade.

1.2 The embargo laws remain in force

The laws and regulations that support the embargo remain in effect and are rigorously enforced by United States Government agencies, especially the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Commerce, and more particularly by OFAC.

The main laws and administrative provisions establishing and governing the embargo policy are the following:

- The Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA) of 1917, section 5 (b) of which provides that the President may impose economic sanctions in time of war or any other national emergency, and prohibits trading with the enemy or with allies of the enemy during hostilities. In 1977, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act restricted the powers of the President to impose new sanctions, referring to national emergency situations. However, TWEA has remained in effect against Cuba, even though the White House has never declared a national emergency with respect to Cuba. Since then, successive United States Presidents have extended the application of TWEA to Cuba. Under cover of that legislation, the oldest of its kind, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) were adopted in 1963: they prohibited United States nationals or persons subject to United States jurisdiction from conducting financial transactions with Cuba, froze Cuban assets, and banned the import of goods of Cuban origin into the United States, among other restrictions. Cuba is the only country to which this legislation applies. On 8 September 2017, President Trump renewed the sanctions against Cuba for another year, under the terms of this Act.
- The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 authorizes the United States President to establish and maintain a total embargo upon trade with Cuba and prohibits the granting of any aid to the Cuban Government. It also provides that United States Government funds earmarked for international aid and delivered to international agencies cannot be used for programmes involving Cuba. It prohibits the granting to Cuba of any assistance mentioned in the Act or any other benefit mentioned in any other law, until such time as the President determines that Cuba has taken action to return to United States citizens and entities no less than 50 per cent of the value of properties nationalized by the Cuban Government following the triumph of the Revolution, or to provide equitable compensation for such properties.
- In Presidential Proclamation 3447, issued on 3 February 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, a total embargo on trade between the United States and Cuba is declared, pursuant to section 620 (a) of the Foreign Assistance Act.
- Under the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of the Department of the Treasury (1963), all Cuban assets in the United States are frozen, all financial and commercial transactions are prohibited unless approved under a licence, Cuban exports to the United States are prohibited and any natural or legal person from the United States or third countries is prohibited from conducting transactions in United States dollars with Cuba, among other provisions.
- Section 2401 (b) (1), “National Security Controls”, “Policy toward individual countries”, of the Export Administration Act of 1979 establishes the Commerce Control List, on which the United States President keeps a number of countries

for which special export controls may be imposed for reasons of national security. Cuba is included on that list.

- The Export Administration Regulations of 1979 establish the grounds for general controls over items and activities subject to Export Administration Regulations control, consistent with the sanctions imposed by the United States Government. They establish a general policy of denying exports and re-exports to Cuba.
- The Cuban Democracy Act ("Torricelli Act") of 1992 prohibits the subsidiaries of United States companies in third countries from trading in goods with Cuba or with Cuban nationals. It bans third-country vessels that have visited a Cuban port from entering United States territory within 180 days, except for those that have a licence from the Secretary of the Treasury.
- The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996, or Helms-Burton Act, codifies the provisions of the embargo and expands its extraterritorial scope through the imposition of penalties on directors of foreign companies that conduct transactions involving United States property nationalized in Cuba and the threat of lawsuits in United States courts (the latter has not been applied). The Act also limits the powers of the President of the United States to suspend the embargo even though it maintains his power to authorize transactions with Cuba through the issuance of licences.
- Section 211 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1999 prohibits United States courts from recognizing the rights of Cuban companies to trademarks associated with nationalized property.
- The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 authorizes the export of agricultural products to Cuba, conditional upon payment in cash and in advance, and without United States financing. It prohibits travel to Cuba for tourist activities by United States persons, defining tourist activity as any activity involving travel to, from or within Cuba that is not explicitly authorized under Title 31, Section 515.560, of the Code of Federal Regulations. In other words, it limits travel to the 12 categories authorized when it was enacted.

1.3 Principal embargo actions applied between June 2017 and March 2018

Not only has the embargo against Cuba remained in force, it has been tightened, as demonstrated by examples of the effects of the policy on Cuban entities and on third parties.

On 8 September 2017, President Trump signed a memorandum addressed to the Secretaries of State and the Treasury in which he extended for one year the implementation of the economic sanctions against Cuba pursuant to the legal framework established in TWEA in 1917.

On 9 November 2017, the Department of State published a list that arbitrarily bans direct financial transactions with 179 Cuban institutions in many different sectors of the national economy, which has a negative impact on the country's economic development and an intimidating effect on companies in the United States or third countries that wish to establish economic, commercial and banking relations with Cuba.

Some specific examples of the implementation of this policy are:

- On 8 June 2017, OFAC fined American Honda Finance Corporation $87,255 because one of the company's subsidiaries in Canada, Honda Canada Finance, had approved and financed 13 car lease agreements between the Cuban Embassy in Canada and a Honda dealer in Ottawa between February 2011 and March

2014. On 30 March 2015, the same company had refused a transfer from the Embassy intended to pay for a replacement vehicle fleet that was to have been provided by the company.

- On 26 June 2017, OFAC fined the American International Group (AIG) $148,698 for an alleged violation of the embargo against Cuba. According to the enforcement information, between 2007 and 2012, AIG committed 29 apparent violations of the embargo by providing insurance coverage for various shipments of goods to or from Cuba or related to a Cuban entity.
- On 18 August 2017, it was reported that the New Zealand bank ASB had refused to issue credit or debit cards to Cuban diplomats, either in their personal capacity or linked to the corporate account of the Cuban Embassy in New Zealand, as Cuba is a country subject to sanctions.
- On 26 September 2017, OFAC banned a donation of medicine to the non-governmental organization Caritas Cuba because the ship carrying the cargo belonged to the United States company Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings.
- At the beginning of October 2017, the British banking and financial institutions HSBC, Barclays and National Westminster Bank froze the current accounts of the Cuban Embassy in the United Kingdom, holding the funds until it could be determined whether they had any relationship with the United States. In addition, the National Westminster Bank retained a transfer in euros for the quarterly payment on the apartment of the tourism counsellor of the Cuban Embassy in London.
- On 17 November 2017, OFAC imposed a fine of $291,825 on BCC Corporate, the Belgian subsidiary of the United States company Alpha Card Group, for selling, between 2009 and 2014, credit cards that were used for purchases in Cuba. Fifty per cent of the shares in the Alpha Card Group belong to the United States company American Express.
- On 20 November 2017, the Canadian branch of the United States company Global Payments refused to provide a service contracted by the Cuban Consulate in Montreal, owing to sanctions related to the United States embargo against Cuba.
- On 27 December 2017, the Inter-American Development Bank blocked funds for an academic agreement between Cuba and the Higher Polytechnic School of Chimborazo, Ecuador, on the basis of the United States embargo against Cuba.
- On 12 February 2018, it was reported that five Indian banks had refused to carry out a transfer from the office of the United Nations Development Programme in Cuba to the Indian company Ankur Scientific Energy Technologies, because of the regulations of the United States embargo.
- On 12 February 2018, the Malaysian subsidiary of the United States firm ADT received instructions from the parent company to refuse to renew the security services contract for the Cuban Embassy in Malaysia, as Cuba is a country subject to United States sanctions.

II. The embargo violates the rights of the Cuban people: damage that has the greatest social impact

2.1 Right to health and food

The strategy of the United States Government to bring the Cuban people to its knees through hunger and disease has meant that such highly sensitive sectors as public health and food remain among the main targets of the embargo against Cuba.

Since 1 January 1959, Cuba has given a high priority to ensuring the welfare of its people. Article 50 of the Constitution of the Republic provides that all citizens of the country have the right to health care and protection. Free medical care for the entire population has been an inviolable principle of the revolutionary Government.

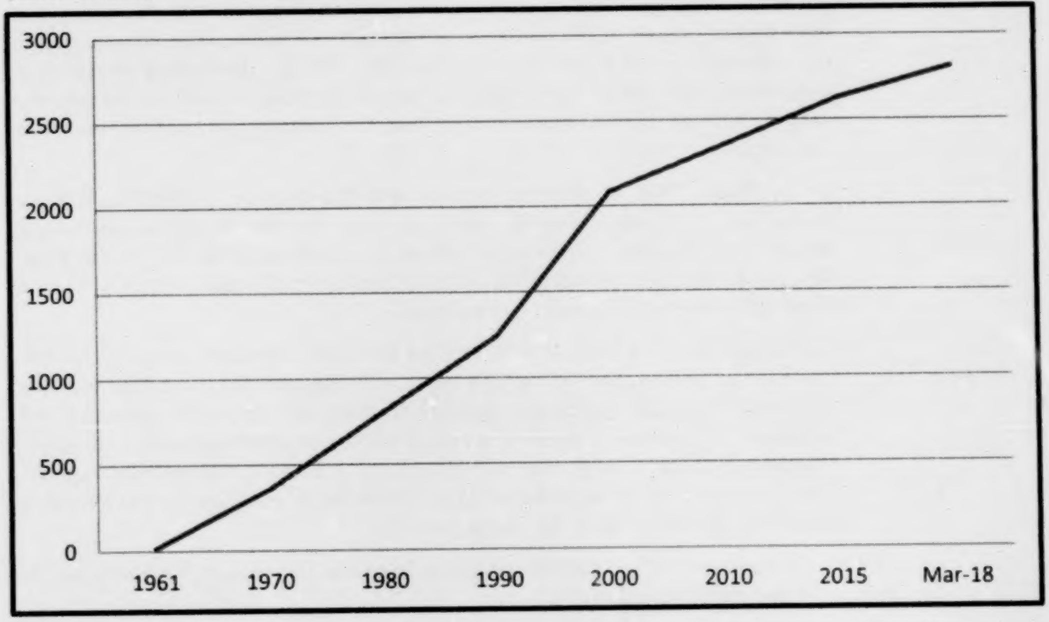
Thanks to the importance attached by the Cuban State to public health, Cuba has achieved results in this area that are comparable to those of many developed countries. For example, in 2017, Cuba achieved the lowest infant mortality rate in its history and one of the lowest in the world, with four deaths per thousand live births.

The Cuban health system has been severely affected by the embargo policy against Cuba, as may be seen from the graph below, because of difficulties in acquiring medicines, reagents, instruments, spare parts for medical equipment and other items necessary for the functioning of the sector, all of which have to be obtained from distant markets and often through intermediaries, resulting in higher prices for such items.

This is compounded by the suffering and despair caused among patients and their relatives, who are unable to access the right medicines to treat a disease or, in many cases, in time to save a life. This pain can never be quantified.

Accumulated impact on the health sector

(Millions of dollars)



During the reporting period, MediCuba, the Cuban company that imports and exports medical products, made requests to purchase items needed for the Cuban health system from more than 30 United States companies. To date, responses have been received only from Agilent and Cook Medical, which noted that, owing to the embargo regulations, they could not sell any medication to Cuba. The requests made by MediCuba include the following:

- A number of United States companies, such as Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb, were asked for quotations for purchases of the drug temozolomide, which is a first-line chemotherapy treatment for malignant brain tumours. To date, no response has been received from the suppliers. As a result, the National Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology has had to resort to alternative treatment protocols in three patients under 15 years of age diagnosed with central nervous system tumours, the second most prevalent neoplasm in children after leukaemia and lymphoma.

- On 21 March 2018, a request was sent to the company Amgen for the purchase of the monoclonal antibody evolocumab (sold under the name Repatha), the first biological drug used to treat hypercholesterolaemia (high cholesterol) in patients at high and very high cardiovascular risk. The use of this drug helps treat cardiovascular diseases, the primary cause of death in Cuba. In addition, it may be used in those patients with familial hypercholesterolaemia, a genetic disease that results in high cholesterol levels from birth. However, no response has been received to date from the company.
- In March 2018, information for the purchase of the da Vinci surgical system, a set of robotic surgery equipment developed by the United States company Intuitive Surgical, was requested twice. The National Centre for Minimally Invasive Surgery needs to purchase da Vinci because this equipment facilitates complex surgery by optimizing the range of movement of the human hand, reducing possible tremor and improving the precision of all movements by the surgeon. To date, no response has been received from this company either.
- On 22 March 2018, a request was sent to the company Illumina, the leading producer of the genetic sequencing technology most commonly used today, for information related to the purchase of human DNA sequencing equipment for the diagnosis of genetic diseases and the risk of developing them. The equipment offers many advantages for the timely diagnosis of cancer and the development of targeted medicine. To date, the company has not responded to the request.
- On 26 March 2018, an order was placed with the company Agilent for a high-technology mass spectrometer, which is used for the diagnosis and early detection of metabolic diseases or inborn errors of metabolism. On the same day, the company responded that it could not currently trade with Cuba, as a result of United States export control laws.
- On 5 April 2018, a request was sent to the Cook Medical company for the purchase of heart valves of various types, vascular prostheses and devices for the extraction of electrodes, among other products to improve the diagnosis and treatment of patients in need of services related to interventional cardiology, clinical electrophysiology and pacemakers, as well as cardiovascular surgery. The company wrote in an email of 9 April 2018 that its products are not available for sale or distribution on the Cuban market.

Other examples of the damage resulting from the embargo in the health sector during the reporting period include:

- In July 2017, the Mexican branch of the United States company Thermo Fisher Scientific sent a rejection notification to four researchers from the National Centre for Medical Genetics, who had previously been admitted to a training course offered by the company. The aim of the training was to introduce new molecular diagnoses of genetic diseases and improve the diagnoses currently provided in Cuba. The Mexican branch was prevented from carrying out this exchange under the restrictions imposed by the embargo.
- In March 2018, the company MediCuba was informed that the Indian company Aculife had refused to make direct shipments to Cuba of levofloxacin, a drug used to treat bacterial skin infections, bronchitis and pneumonia, among other diseases. This was because the Indian company's bank would not authorize the

payments made by Cuba, since the shipping documents supporting the payment had a country under embargo as the final destination.

- Cuba is unable to acquire on the United States market nitric oxide, used to prevent or effectively treat acute pulmonary hypertension attacks, which can be serious and even fatal. Between 8 and 10 per cent of the operations performed each year at the William Soler Paediatric Cardiology Centre are carried out on children suffering from this disease. Nitric oxide, because of the risk of explosion, can only be transported by ship and for short periods, which prevents shipping from distant markets.

In addition, the setting back of bilateral relations has had a negative impact on academic and scientific exchanges between Cuban and United States health professionals and technicians. To give just one example, the Institute of Gastroenterology of Cuba reported that, as a result of the new regulations imposed by the Government of President Trump, the events planned for this year to bring together hepatologists from both countries have been cancelled.

The losses incurred by the food industry and agriculture during the reporting period amount to $413,793,100, an increase of $66,195,100 compared with the previous period.

The greatest impacts of the embargo on the food sector result from the fact that Cuban products cannot be placed on the United States market. The Havana Club rum company, one of the most prestigious liquor producers in the world, alone lost $90,930,000 as a result.

Other rum brands, such as Santiago de Cuba, Isla del Tesoro and Cubay, which could, based on current interest shown by the main United States distributors, potentially export at least 200,000 cases a year to the United States market, cannot place their products on that market.

If the Grupo Empresarial Ganadero de Cuba livestock business group had access to United States pork farming technologies, meat production in Cuba would increase by 2,050 tons.

The forgone revenue would have facilitated reinvestment and the creation of solid infrastructure in the food sector, particularly in view of the difficulties faced by the main sectors of the Cuban economy in accessing external financing as a result of the embargo policy.

The Cuban Government has had to make great efforts to achieve the results obtained in the area of food security, which have been recognized by such specialized agencies of the United Nations system as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which in a recently published report considered Cuba to be the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean free of severe child malnutrition.

In order to preserve these achievements, one of the guiding principles of the national plan for the economic and social development of Cuba up to 2030 is to reach agricultural production and marketing levels that assure a high degree of self-sufficiency in food.

2.2 Right to education, sports and culture

Since 1 January 1959, guaranteeing free access to quality education for all Cubans has been a fundamental goal of the Revolution. This was reflected in the budget approved by the Government for the year 2018, in which 8,180 million pesos were assigned to education, allowing the enrolment of 1,775,000 students in preschool, primary and secondary education and 185,000 students in higher education. In order to safeguard the quality of education for all, Cuba must address the limitations imposed under the United States embargo policy.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Cuba has the most highly developed education system in Latin America. All young people in the country have guaranteed free access to education, including university education.

The main losses reported in this sector are the result, inter alia, of increased freight charges for the transportation of products purchased on distant markets; the lack or inadequacy of certain teaching and research means and resources, owing to their higher costs on other markets; limited access to scientific information and the computer tools needed for educational multimedia production, and obstacles to receiving payment for professional services provided abroad.

Special needs education is a priority for the Cuban Government. To that end, the State establishes measures that contribute to the proper functioning of its schools with a view to achieving inclusive education for all children with disabilities. However, owing to the restrictions imposed under the embargo, Cuba cannot obtain all the equipment necessary to assure a proper education for such children. To give just one example, Perkins brand Braille mechanical writing machines cannot be purchased by Cuba, as they are manufactured and sold in the United States.

In the reporting period, the number of academic exchanges among universities has decreased. Examples include:

- The Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Havana reported that, during the period under review, it received applications from between 10 and 12 United States and/or Puerto Rican students to carry out postgraduate studies in Cuba. However, as a result of the embargo, students of those nationalities are prohibited from taking courses at Cuban universities.
- Applications from the Institute of Pharmacy and Food for the renewal of licences for the development of teaching and research programmes (semester programmes, short courses and/or events) have been refused. In 2017, the fourth pharmaceutical and food sciences congress and the first student pharmaceutical and food sciences workshop were held in Havana, with the participation of 24 delegates from the United States. At those gatherings, opportunities for exchange and collaboration with two universities in the United States and the University of Puerto Rico were identified. However, it has not been possible to establish links with those institutions as a result of the policy of tightening the embargo implemented by the Government of President Trump.
- The Technological University of Havana states that, despite the significant results achieved up to 2016 in the holding of international workshops and courses, the enrolment of United States students in its faculties has decreased significantly.

Cuban sport is one of the great achievements of the Revolution, but it has become more difficult to import sports equipment made by United States brands, the use of much of which is mandatory under the official regulations of international federations.

Cuban sports education schools face constraints in acquiring technologically advanced medicines, muscle recovery products and equipment, owing to the limitations on imports of products and items from the United States. These items are vital to the improvement of the infrastructure of training centres and conditions for athletes.

Examples of the impact of the embargo in this sector during the reporting period include the following:

- Use of the Nexy credit line that was opened for the National Institute for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation for the purchase of sporting goods from Japanese companies has been significantly limited because these companies' commercial distributor for our geographical area is in the United States.
- The Cuban Anti-doping Laboratory, one of the most important laboratories in the region, had to purchase its gas chromatography tandem mass spectrometer, the main tool used to detect the presence of drugs in athletes, at a very much higher price than if it had been able to acquire the tool in the United States.
- The same laboratory, unable to purchase the items necessary to conduct tests under the national anti-doping programme on the United States market or from third-country subsidiaries of United States companies, was faced with a rise of 20 per cent in the programme's costs.
- Some 250 United States athletes were prevented from participating in the Havana marathon (Marabana) and triathlon, owing to the limitations imposed under the embargo on the citizens of the United States themselves.
- Sports equipment made by such United States brands as Louisville, Wilson, X Bats, Rawlings, ATEC, 3N2, Easton and W&W, much of it mandatory at international sporting events, must be bought from third countries, which adds between 20 and 30 per cent to the price and increases freight costs.
- Cuban Paralympic athletes are affected by their lack of access to the state-of-the-art equipment used in international competitions, which is of United States origin. This puts them at a disadvantage compared to athletes from the rest of the world.

The development of culture in all its manifestations is a priority for the Cuban State, as demonstrated by the cultural events held at the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., in May 2018.

The revolutionary Government's cultural policy is founded on the indissoluble bond between culture and freedom, found among the ideals of the greatest figures in our history.

However, culture continues to be affected by the implementation of the United States embargo policy against Cuba. From April 2017 to March 2018, exchanges between Cuban artists and their counterparts in the United States have decreased. The following are examples of this:

- In 2017, 497 musicians and music professionals from the United States were scheduled to participate in performances and events in Cuba. As a result of the tightening of the embargo, they could not participate in the activities that they had already arranged.
- Between the last quarter of 2017 and early 2018, visits to Cuba by 15 United States groups, comprising around 300 people, including musicians and others involved, were cancelled.
- A group of students from Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music was unable to travel to Cuba to participate in workshops with Cuban student and professional musicians. The sound engineers who were responsible for organizing the trip to Cuba informed the music recording and publishing company Empresa de Grabaciones y Ediciones Musicales that they had been warned by the United States authorities to refrain from making the trip, owing to the regulations in force.

Moreover, the embargo hampers the marketing and promotion of Cuban music, visual arts, performing arts and literature. The following examples demonstrate this:

- Between April 2017 and March 2018, a total of 37 groups, with 367 musicians, travelled to the United States for performances that were of necessity promotional in nature, owing to the embargo regulations. They were not paid for their performances.
- Without the embargo, exports by Musicalia, one of the agencies that represents musicians for the Cuban company Artex, could have been 20 times greater.
- Bis Music, Artex's record label and music publisher, contacted several United States music distribution and publishing companies that were interested in doing business with Cuba. However, owing to their fear of being penalized under the embargo regulations, those companies did not send the documents necessary for negotiations to take place.
- The performing arts groups Revolution, Rakatan and Havana Queen, as well as classical singers and circus performers, were unable to conclude contracts directly with United States promoters interested in Cuban artistic talent.
- The Collage Habana National Centre for Visual Arts, as part of its efforts to develop exports of Cuban art, noted a decrease in sales to United States citizens following the signature of the Presidential Memorandum in June 2017; despite being interested in Cuban art, those citizens fear the penalties they could face if they buy from Cuba.
- In 2016 and 2017, the Havana International Book Fair held the first and second meetings of Cuban and United States publishers, distributors and literary agents, at which there was a fruitful exchange that would have enabled the promotion of rapprochement and cooperation between the two countries in the field of publishing. However, as a result of the new measures taken by the Government of the United States, it was not possible to hold the third meeting of Cuban and United States publishers, distributors and literary agents at the 2018 Fair.

Owing to the embargo regulations, materials needed for teaching the arts, such as books on how to read music, sheet music notebooks, saxophones, and guitar, violin, cello and double bass strings, are bought at high prices on the international market, when they could be purchased at more affordable prices on the United States market.

The film industry in Cuba has also been hit hard by the conditions imposed under the embargo; for example, the animation studios of the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry do not have access to the software licences necessary for their production processes and Cuban film industry representatives cannot attend the most important event for the international film market, the American Film Market.

III. The right to development

The biopharmaceutical sector has been one of the drivers of Cuban economic growth and exports in recent years. The products made by this industry, primarily in the field of biotechnology, are among those that would have the greatest chance of entering the United States market: they are innovative and offer high value added, and there is potential demand in that country.

The following are specific examples of the damage caused by the embargo in this sector:

- Heberprot-P, developed by the Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, is a unique and novel drug for the treatment of advanced diabetic foot ulcers. Without the embargo, bearing in mind that 9.4 per cent of the United States population has diabetes, Cuba would be able to export Heberprot-P to the United States market, with economic benefits for Cuba and health benefits for the United States patients affected.

- The Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology has lost approximately $392,085 owing to the purchase of basic production inputs through intermediaries in third countries. Similarly, it has not been possible to receive products contracted from United States manufacturers, forcing the Centre to buy elsewhere, which results in higher costs.
- The company Sasol Wax sold some of its shares to United States companies and could not continue to deliver six raw materials that it would normally have supplied to the company FarmaCuba, even after concluding a contract for 2017, as a result of the regulations imposed under the embargo against Cuba.
- The manufacturer Blanver, with which Cuba had had business relations for several years, reported that it would be impossible to supply some of the inputs ordered for 2017 and that it could not supply the products contracted for 2018, with the result that a shipment of 21,000 kg of Microcel 101 remains pending, because Blanver was acquired by a company whose operational headquarters for global pharmaceuticals is in the United States.
- The import-export company FarmaCuba incurred monetary losses amounting to $4,457,374 because it could not make transactions in dollars and because of difficulties in finding banks willing to transfer to Cuba, even in other foreign currencies, payments for exports made.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo has continued to affect the development of tourism, by having a negative impact on important areas relating to services, operations and logistics. The regulations and provisions issued by the United States Departments of the Treasury, Commerce and State on 8 November 2017 further restrict trade and have had a direct impact on the number of people travelling from the United States to Cuba. The following are some examples:

- In the last quarter of 2017, the number of United States citizens arriving in Cuba fell by 52 per cent, or approximately 65,040 visitors.
- Travel agencies received cancellations from 240 tour groups as a result of State Department alerts. The agency Havanatur Celimar, which works directly with the United States market, received cancellations from 150 groups of visitors that had previously been announced by various United States tourist agencies and operators.
- From 1 January to 13 March 2018, the number of United States visitors fell by 43 per cent, or 51,677 travellers, compared to the same period in 2017.
- The online sales of 99 per cent of the hotels in the Gaviota hotel group were affected, as the companies Booking.com and Expedia, which had provided those services, terminated their business relations with Gaviota on 9 November 2017.

The regulations and provisions of November 2017 have also had a negative impact in the area of insurance. The reduction in the number of travellers from the United States has affected sales of the basic travel insurance included in the price of airline tickets.

The embargo has also harmed the communications and information technology sector, including telecommunications. During the reporting period the telecommunications company Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba remains the most affected company, with losses exceeding $60,143,000.

Typical examples of these losses include the following:

- Following the measures taken to tighten the embargo policy by the current United States Government and the resulting decrease in the number of visitors to Cuba, the number of new contracts for roaming services with Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba has fallen.
- Payments to companies that provide broadband services to assure the country's international connectivity have been retained by banks on the grounds that the providers may be linked with United States entities or entities located in United States territory. This has led to non-compliance with payment cycles agreed with those providers.
- In March 2017, OFAC fined an Asian company, the manufacturer of one of the most widely used pieces of equipment in Cuban communications systems, $1,190,000 for violating the regulations of the Departments of the Treasury and Commerce concerning the export of products to regimes hostile to the United States. Following the fine, the company refused to continue to conduct operations with Cuba, because Cuba is on the list of countries subject to United States Government sanctions.
- In addition, it is impossible to access high-performance brands and leading-edge telecommunications equipment, including fixed telephones, mobile telephones, antennas and computer systems, that are distributed by or under patent of United States entities. This forces Cuban companies to buy such equipment through third parties, with the resulting increase in costs and difficulty in obtaining spare parts and installation services.
- The embargo policy restricts free access from within Cuba to Internet content and infringes the right to the freedoms expressed and accepted by authors publishing software under a General Public Licence. The impact is that access to services or to downloadable information is denied once systems recognize that a link is being accessed from an Internet address granted to the Cuban domain, .cu
- In the user guides and user licence contracts for Microsoft products, there is at least one section on export controls that expressly states that neither the software nor the documentation and underlying information or technology may be downloaded, exported or re-exported to Cuba and that, by downloading or using the software, the client undertakes to comply with the above provisions and declares that he or she does not work or live in and is not a native of any of the countries listed. This situation could potentially lead to costly and lengthy legal proceedings, both with regard to ownership of the product and to marketing and sales.

The energy and mining sector has been particularly affected by the embargo. Cuba has systematically taken steps to save energy, use renewable energy and improve energy efficiency. One of the goals set out in the national economic and social development plan to 2030 is to guarantee, in an environmentally sustainable way, an adequate, reliable, diversified and modern energy supply that will substantially increase the share of renewable energy sources, essentially biomass, wind and photovoltaic systems, in the national energy mix.

It is hoped that by 2030, 24 per cent of electricity production will come from renewable sources of energy. However, this objective is hampered by the effects of the embargo on the Cuban economy.

Examples of the harm resulting from the embargo in this sector include the following:

- The Grupo Empresarial Energoimport business group reported that it had taken various steps to purchase spare parts for the maintenance and operation of the Gibara II wind farm. A contract with a prestigious company in the sector has been signed, but it has not been possible to obtain these inputs because foreign banks do not accept letters of credit from Cuba to make the purchases.
- Since 2015, the Grupo Empresarial Geominsal business group has sought to acquire an inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer, a tool needed in geological research. However, no supplier has been willing to provide the equipment because it contains components manufactured in the United States.

Another sector affected by the embargo has been transport. From April 2017 to March 2018, the damage resulting from the embargo in the transport sector amounted to $101,550,000.

The greatest losses during that period were mainly suffered by the Corporación de la Aviación Civil de Cuba (Cuban Civil Aviation Corporation), which experienced a cumulative loss of $63,640,000. That loss resulted mainly from flight cancellations by four United States airlines owing to a lack of passengers to fill their flights. The airlines in question were Silver Airways, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines and Alaska Airlines, with a consequent decrease in the number of United States flights and travellers.

An illustrative example of the harm caused under the embargo by economic sanctions in the transport sector are the difficulties facing Cubana de Aviación in the purchase or lease of aircraft with technical components based on virtually any technology. As a result of the extraterritorial effect of the sanctions, Cubana de Aviación has no access whatsoever to aircraft produced by companies such as Airbus, Dassault and Boeing, regardless of their owner, nationality or the country in which they are registered and operate.

This prevents Cubana de Aviación from having aircraft maintained by specialized agencies in almost any country. In addition, the obstacles to banking transactions under the sanctions drastically limit the performance of Cubana de Aviación as an airline.

In recent years, the United States Government has introduced exceptions in its sanctions against Cuba that, in a very limited way and subject to a strict and unpredictable regulatory process, would potentially make it possible for Cuba to purchase or lease aircraft in the United States, along with parts for civil aviation. This is not particularly feasible, commercially and financially, because the laws and additional regulations of the economic embargo remain in effect.

However, all the extraterritorial restrictions that prevent the Cuban civil aviation sector from interacting freely with companies from the rest of the world, where aircraft and aviation parts are produced, remain in force. The impact of these measures on flight safety, the stability of the airline and its chances of survival is clear.

Another of the losses in this sector was highlighted in the case of the company Selecmar, which lost $13,420,000 in relation to the activities of merchant and cruise ships. This was due primarily to the ban on Cuban sailors being employed by the United States owners of cruise ships that put into port in Cuba. These ships include the MSC Divina and the MSC Seaside.

In addition, the ban on United States citizens travelling to Cuba as tourists continues to affect the tourist transportation services of the Taxis Cuba business group and the Empresa de Ómnibus Nacionales bus company.

In the area of construction there have also been major losses under the embargo policy against Cuba. Ninety-six per cent of the total losses were the result of the lack of access to efficient means and technologies on the United States market in order to develop housing construction in Cuba.

The comprehensive development of Cuban industry is essential to the implementation of the national economic and social development plan to 2030. However, this sector has also been affected by the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States. From April 2017 to March 2018, the losses suffered by industry amounted to $50,004,400.

Examples of the damage caused by the embargo in this sector include the following:

- The chemical industry business group, Grupo Empresarial de la Industria Química, reported that the Spanish company Lomisa had been unable to provide replacement parts for the Lefi and Rheinhütte centrifugal pumps used in the chlorine and caustic soda plant of the Empresa Electroquímica de Sagua la Grande electrochemical company. This was because the manufacturer of the parts, Rheinhütte, had refused to supply them, as the final destination was Cuba.
- The Cuban recycling industry does not have access to much of the technological equipment necessary for the recovery, compacting, shredding, cutting and transport of recyclable waste, because it is manufactured by United States companies.
- The metal production company Empresa de Producciones Metálicas (Cometal), unable to buy 13 elevators and spare parts on the United States market, had to purchase them on distant markets. The total cost of the equipment was $2,207,022. If the company could have purchased them in the United States, it would have saved $490,444, enough to buy six more elevators on the United States market, as well as parts and accessories for equipment that has not yet been repaired.

The impact of the embargo against Cuba on the technology sector has generated losses amounting to $290.6 million.

IV. Impact on the external sector of the Cuban economy

4.1 Foreign trade

The damage caused by the embargo to foreign trade during the reporting period amounts to $3.3434 billion.

The greatest impact of the embargo on foreign trade is in income not earned for the export of goods and services, totalling $2.4759 billion.

The embargo continues to cause serious damage to our economy owing to the enforced geographical relocation of trade, compounded by the need to maintain large inventories. Cuba lost $867.5 million because of this. In addition, compared to the previous period, the cost of financing has increased by $21,192,481 to an estimated $54,326,250 as a result of country risk. These indicators are affected by the lack of access to bank or soft loans. Consequently, Cuban companies are forced to work with commercial credit granted by the suppliers themselves with less favourable conditions.

Losses resulting from the use of intermediaries and the related increase in the cost of goods amounted to $59,825,479, an increase of 196 per cent compared to the previous period.

Until 1962, Cuba was the natural market for the purchase by the United States of cigars and of leaf tobacco for the United States tobacco industry. The United States was a major export destination for Cuban cigars. In the decade from 1949 to 1958, the United States accounted for 32.6 per cent of the volume and 34.6 percent of the value of such exports.

It is estimated that approximately 350 million units are sold on the United States premium tobacco market each year, with 325 million units imported in 2017. It is the largest premium tobacco market in the world, equivalent to 74 per cent of the total world market, which is calculated at 470 million units.

Cuban cigars account for 70 per cent in terms of volume and 80 per cent in terms of value on the markets of countries where they are sold. In view of the current state of the premium tobacco market and the marketing strategy of the Habanos company of the Grupo Empresarial Tabacuba business group, the same percentage could be reached on the United States tobacco market.

It is estimated that there would be sales of 50 million units in the first year of operations on the United States market, gradually increasing over a period of 10 or 15 years to approach the potential target share.

On the basis of the Habanos company's average export price in 2017 ($2.69), the losses incurred because the product cannot be placed on the United States market are estimated at $134.5 million.

If the United States market share for machine-made cigars were the same as the world market share (0.8 per cent), at least another 100 million cigars could be sold there. At an average price of $145 per thousand, there would be additional income of $14.5 million from the sale of this product on the United States market.

Damage in the form of revenue forgone as a result of the embargo is also clear in the area of fruit exports, for which the United States would be the natural market.

The food company Empresa Comercializadora de Alimentos (Alimport), an importer of products intended mainly for the basic food basket and social consumption as well as raw materials for the Cuban food industry, continues to suffer from the rigour and negative impact of the economic, commercial and financial embargo policy.

Since no financial resources are available for the sustained maintenance and increase of purchases in the United States, Alimport must import from other markets where it has liquid assets from its exports or lines of credit. That increases the costs of sea freight.

The estimated losses suffered by Alimport during the period under review as a result of the purchase of the required products on more distant markets amounted to $3,533,271.

The lack of access to the United States market also places limits on the sale of sugar, coffee and honey.

In 2017, imports of raw sugar in the United States totalled 4,033,000 metric tons. In 1959, United States sugar imports amounted to 4,187,915 tons; 3,005,000 tons, or 72 per cent of the total, were supplied by Cuba.

Taking into account the Cuban share of the United States sugar market before 1959 and Cuban production figures for 2017, and disregarding sales or export commitments to other markets, Cuba would have been able to export 701,798 tons to the United States market, but that sugar in fact had to be sold on the world market at lower prices. The corresponding losses amounted to $118,674,041.

Despite the interest of several United States firms in buying Cuban honey in bulk, they continue to be denied a licence to make purchases in Cuba. Therefore, the largest sales Cuba can make are on European markets, where there are high tariff barriers.

The United States market is one of the five largest importers of roasted ground coffee in the world. Cuban coffee, given its quality, could meet a large part of the demand for this product in the United States were it not for the prohibitions imposed under the embargo.

4.2 Finance

During the reporting period, Cuban financial institutions continued to be subject to a policy of hostility and persecution by the Government of the United States. Financial and monetary damage as a result of the embargo amounted to $538.3 million.

The regulations and provisions issued on 8 November 2017 by the Departments of the Treasury, Commerce and State prohibit direct financial transactions by persons or companies subject to the jurisdiction of the United States with 179 Cuban entities and subentities.

This policy has resulted in the cancellation of bank transfers ordered by Cuban companies on the list of entities subject to sanctions. Consequently, they cannot make direct financial transactions with any United States natural or legal person. This indirectly affects transactions conducted by Cuban banking institutions, which are forced to modify the usual banking channels (which are significantly restricted) to make their collections and payments, resulting in difficulties and additional costs in commercial transactions.

Cuba remains unable to access sources of financing from United States banks and business entities, the use of which is common practice in world trade. Between April 2017 and March 2018, the Cuban banking system suffered damage as a result of reported incidents involving 128 foreign banks. In comparison with the previous period, a further 28 banks espoused the policy of harassment imposed under the United States embargo, thereby undermining the normal functioning and operations of Cuban banking institutions, which are forced to work in an environment of constant uncertainty and adversity in the movement of their financial flows.

The following are some of the main difficulties faced by Cuban banking institutions in their operations between April 2017 and March 2018:

- Cuba cannot use the United States dollar in commercial and financial transactions with the outside world. Despite the fact that in March 2016 President Barack Obama authorized the use of the dollar in commercial transactions between Cuba and other countries, transactions in both directions remain affected by the continued uncertainties and fears of banking institutions based in the United States regarding what is or is not possible with regard to Cuba, and by the history of million-dollar fines imposed on banks in third countries.
- Difficulties remain in accessing the new technologies of the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), because most companies that provide the related software and technologies are United States companies. It is therefore difficult to receive the statements of account that foreign banks must send to Cuban banks through SWIFT, owing to the restrictions imposed on Cuba.
- Relationship management application (RMA) keys for SWIFT services were cancelled by 20 foreign banks, of which 17 were European, 2 were Latin American and 1 was African. These keys are authorizations exchanged with

correspondent banks to filter and impose restrictions on the messages received and the type of message sent.

- Requests to close Cuban accounts were made by four foreign banking institutions, of which three were European and one was Latin American.
- The accounts of Cuban embassies and diplomatic officials abroad, and of representative offices of Cuban entities, were closed, or requests to open such accounts were denied, because Cuba is subject to sanctions and the embargo regulations. For example, a number of bank branches in one Latin American country refused to open an account for the Cuban embassy in that country, depriving the embassy of the right to safeguard the financial resources available to it. This situation runs counter to the most basic rules of international law.
- Fourteen entities, of which six were Asian, three were European, two were Latin American, one was North American and two were from Oceania, refused to transfer funds from or to Cuba and to provide other banking services. Examples include the following:
  - The bank of a foreign entrepreneur interested in participating in the 2017 Havana International Fair to initiate business with Cuba refused to issue an endorsement or letter certifying that his company engages in normal commercial activity and is free of debt.
  - A Cuban embassy in Europe was unable to make the partial payment of the annual contribution of Cuba to an international organization because the organization's bank refused to carry out the transaction.
- Funds are retained and uncertainty prevails about their fate, which makes it difficult to access financial resources at the appropriate time. For example:
  - Two foreign entities retained funds from Cuban institutions. One payment was retained by OFAC and the other by a bank in Asia.
  - A Latin American citizen residing temporarily in Cuba, who works for a European institution that pays him in dollars, had his salary retained because the correspondent bank of the European bank that processed the payment withheld the funds, diverting them to OFAC. The client submitted a complaint to OFAC, to no effect.
- A total of 34 foreign banks, of which 24 were Asian, 9 European and 1 Latin American, refused to process or provide advice regarding operations related to letters of credit issued in Cuba. In most cases, this has an external impact owing to unnecessary delays, because the Cuban company has to contact its supplier to locate another bank to process the documentation. For example:
  - A bank from an Asian country announced that it would not endorse a letter of credit issued by a Cuban banking entity and insisted that it not be contacted again or used for the provision of any advice. Eventually, it completely terminated its operations with Cuba.
  - Another Asian bank announced its refusal to endorse new letters of credit, receive commercial documents under letters of credit already issued or receive payments from a Cuban banking entity, citing the increased risk it faced owing to the prohibitions imposed by the Government of President Trump.
  - A European bank indicated that it would not endorse letters of credit from Cuban companies, owing to the new policy imposed by the current Government of the United States of America against Cuba.

- Banking transactions were returned by 55 entities, including 26 from Europe, 15 from Asia, 11 from Latin America, 2 from North America and 1 from Oceania.
- Signed banking transactions and agreements were cancelled by three banks, two Asian and one European. One Asian bank suspended all ties with a Cuban bank, stating that they could not continue to operate in any way.
- Difficulties have been encountered in the dispatch and receipt of bank documents through courier agencies. For example, some banking institutions in Latin America and Europe have informed Cuban banks that, owing to the embargo regulations, they have been unable to send banking documentation through the courier company DHL Express, because it requires its clients to sign a sanctions indemnity and warranty letter to certify that no employee or agent of the company, nor the company itself, will be punished or penalized as a result of the contents of the shipment, and that neither the shipper nor the recipient is included in any sanctions list. Those institutions have also stated that the terms of that letter would prevail over the terms and conditions of the general or transport contract, affecting or delaying the completion of contracts signed for the dispatch and receipt of correspondence.

V. The embargo violates international law. Extraterritorial application

The extraterritorial nature of the embargo has continued to intensify. During the reporting period, the penalization and persecution of citizens, institutions and companies of third countries that established or intended to develop economic, commercial and financial relations with Cuba were tightened.

The extraterritorial application of the embargo seriously harms Cuba, but also affects the interests and sovereign rights of third countries, which is a violation of international law, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of free trade.

Despite the common political will to develop mutually beneficial economic, commercial and financial relations with third countries, and the rejection of the application of unilateral sanctions with extraterritorial effects and of interference by the United States Government in such relations, the embargo has had an unprecedented negative impact, especially since the second half of 2017, which has significantly affected commercial and financial relations with those countries.

The enactment of the Helms-Burton Act and the extraterritorial nature of the embargo were factors in the enactment of "antidote legislation" designed by third countries to protect themselves against possible losses resulting from the implementation of this policy. However, the intimidating effect of the embargo against Cuba has prevented the proper implementation of those regulations.

There are numerous recent examples of Cuban commercial operations with companies from third countries being hindered or halted by the bans, threats and blackmail of the United States Government.

5.1 Impact on the banking and financial sector

- On 29 June 2017, Stanbic Bank Zimbabwe, part of the Standard Bank Group, which is based in South Africa, announced the closure of the accounts of the Cuban Embassy in Zimbabwe and the termination of transactions related to Cuba, on instructions from its correspondent banks Deutsche Bank (Germany) and Unicredit Bank (Italy), for reasons related to the United States embargo against Cuba.

- On 20 July 2017, a branch of the BNP Paribas Fortis bank in Belgium refused to issue a bank guarantee certifying that the Belgian company Représentations Internationales de Produits Industriels conducted normal commercial activity and was free of debt, because the guarantee would be used for commercial activities in Cuba.
- On 19 September 2017, the Netherlands bank ING rejected a transfer from a Netherlands national to an account held by the Asociación de Amistad República Federal de Alemania-Cuba (Federal Republic of Germany-Cuba Friendship Association) as a donation to help recovery efforts after Hurricane Irma struck Cuba. The bank argued that it did not enter into transactions that were directly or indirectly related to certain countries, including Cuba, as established in the OFAC regulations.
- In November 2017, OFAC fined the American Express Company $204,277 for violating the embargo laws against Cuba. This fine was imposed because the Belgian company BCC Corporate, a subsidiary of Alpha Card Group, 50 per cent of which is owned by American Express, had issued European clients with credit cards that were used for purchases in Cuba.
- On 28 December 2017, the New Zealand bank ASB froze a transfer of Australian dollars from the Cuban Embassy in New Zealand to a Vietnamese cargo agency.
- On 6 February 2018, the United States company Stripe closed the accounts of all its clients with links to Cuba, owing to the new measures taken by the United States Government against Cuba.
- On 13 February 2018, the New Zealand bank ASB rejected a transfer from a New Zealand citizen to a travel agency because the word "Cuba" was used in the transaction reference. The bank informed the person that, pursuant to its regulations, it would not enter into any transaction directly or indirectly related to Cuba.
- On 13 February 2018, the International Bank of Qatar refused to conduct a transfer by a Cuban national based in that country for reasons related to the United States embargo against Cuba.
- On 9 March 2018, the First Caribbean International Bank, a subsidiary of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce with branches in Jamaica, blocked the installation of the credit and debit card charging system required by the Cuban Embassy because it feared being penalized for violating the embargo regulations.

5.2 Damage to Cuban entities

- On 11 May 2017, the Cuban firm Tecnotex received a communication from the Hyundai Elevator Company, stating that, in light of the embargo, the company could not work directly with Tecnotex because Tecnotex has accounts at banks that have financial relations with United States banks.
- On 2 June 2017, it was reported that the online learning platform FutureLearn, belonging to the British public institution the Open University, had blocked the participation of several members of the Cuban Society of Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation because Cuba is on the list of countries subject to United States sanctions.
- On 21 July 2017, a Belgian subsidiary of the United States company Hewlett-Packard refused to sell 30 specialized computers to the company Studiotech Belgium because they were to be used to establish a complete station that would be sold to the Cuban Radio and Television Institute.

- On 27 July 2017, it was reported that a branch of the BNP Paribas Fortis bank in Belgium refused to send a remittance to Cuba and conduct a transfer to artists who had participated in the exhibition Cubaland, because both cases were related to Cuba.
- On 4 January 2018, it was reported that the First National Bank, a South African bank, had refused to process a transaction from one of its customers to the office of Havanatour UK, because the transaction was related to an entity on the OFAC sanctions list.
- On 12 February 2018, it was reported that the Brazilian bank Bradesco had prevented the Brazilian company Emporium Cigars from doing business with the Banco Internacional de Comercio de Cuba and the company Habanos because of the regulations imposed under the embargo against Cuba.
- On 19 March 2018, the Panamanian bank Multibank cancelled several transactions made in euros by United States companies to a Cuban company through the Panamanian company CCAS. The transactions, which were payments for overflight services, were cancelled because they originated in a United States bank and their destination was Cuba.
- On 28 March 2018, the German bank Deutsche Postbank, owing to the embargo regulations, rejected a transfer in euros from the German publisher 8MAI to Granma Internacional.

5.3 Other extraterritorial impacts

- On 18 September 2017, the French office of the company Forax informed the Permanent Delegation of Cuba to UNESCO that it would cancel all fuel cards issued to the Delegation, as one fuel supplier, the British and Netherlands company Royal Dutch Shell, had prohibited the provision of fuel cards to countries that, as is the case of Cuba, are subject to United States sanctions.
- On 28 October 2017, the Cuban Embassy in Australia reported that the private banks Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ), Commonwealth Bank, St. George Bank, Bendigo Bank and Westpac continued to block transactions related to Cuba, in this case, aid sent in solidarity following the damage caused by Hurricane Irma.
- On 28 October 2017, it was reported that ANZ had advised the New Zealand travel agency World Journeys to suspend direct or indirect transactions with Cuba; otherwise, World Journeys would be required to close its corporate account with ANZ.
- On 27 November 2017, the Chilean private banks Banco de Crédito de Inversiones de Chile, Banco Edwards, Banco de Chile, ITAN and BBVA Chile and the government bank BancoEstado refused to transfer to Cuba the funds raised by the Movimiento Chileno de Solidaridad con Cuba (Chilean Movement of Solidarity with Cuba) to help recovery after the damage caused by Hurricane Irma. They argued that Cuba was subject to the regulations of the United States embargo and therefore could not be allowed to perform these transactions.
- On 18 August 2017, it was reported that a New Zealand branch of the Westpac bank had temporarily stopped a transfer from the New Zealand company Havana Coffee Works for the purchase of coffee in Vanuatu, because the name of the company contained the word Havana.
- In February 2018, the Sheraton Addis Hotel, in Ethiopia, on instructions from its parent company in the United States, refused to accept room reservations for

a Cuban delegation that was scheduled to visit the country, because of the embargo regulations against Cuba.

- On 27 April 2018, the company FedEx Express cancelled the account belonging to the Cuban Embassy in Antigua and Barbuda, on the grounds that the company and its international subsidiaries were subject to the law of the United States and could not therefore conduct transfers to Governments under OFAC sanctions.
- On 21 May 2018, it was reported that the Argentine online payment company Prisma (Todo Pago), had withdrawn the services it had provided to the Havanatur branch in Argentina, arguing that the branch was included in the OFAC sanctions list.

VI. Universal rejection of the embargo

6.1 Opposition within the United States

More, and more diverse, segments of United States society reject the senseless embargo policy against Cuba, despite the interest of the current Government in reversing the progress achieved in bilateral relations between December 2014 and the beginning of 2017.

Groups such as Engage Cuba and CubaNow, which aim to promote bilateral relations and bring about the lifting of the embargo, continued their work in that regard and diversified their scope of action. In addition, they managed to maintain their reach in such sectors of United States society as agriculture, culture and business, and even worked to build support in the executive and legislative branches of Government, at both the federal and state levels.

The following are some examples of the opposition to the embargo within the United States:

- On 6 June 2017, the Michigan State Senate adopted a resolution to request the Congress of the United States to develop and improve trade relations with Cuba.
- On 12 June 2017, the Democratic Senators Amy Klobuchar (Minnesota), Chris Murphy (Connecticut), Dick Durbin (Illinois), Debbie Stabenow (Michigan), Sheldon Whitehouse (Rhode Island), Elizabeth Warren (Massachusetts), Al Franken (Minnesota), Brian Schatz (Hawaii), Michael Bennet (Colorado), Jon Tester (Montana), Patrick Leahy (Vermont), Ron Wyden (Oregon), Claire McCaskill (Missouri) and Jeanne Shaheen (New Hampshire) sent an open letter to the Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, in which they called for the maintenance and expansion of economic and political ties with Cuba, including the lifting of the embargo.
- On 12 June 2017, the group Engage Cuba and the company Morning Consult published the results of a national survey on Cuba, which showed that the majority of registered Republican voters supported the lifting of restrictions on trade and travel to Cuba, and that the majority of United States citizens supported the maintenance of bilateral relations.
- On 20 June 2017, the Illinois Democratic Congressman Bobby Rush introduced bill H.R. 2296 in the House of Representatives in order to, inter alia, lift the embargo against Cuba.
- On 20 June 2017, Florida Atlantic University released the results of a survey on Cuba, conducted in Florida, that showed that only 34 per cent of the residents of that State supported President Trump's new policy.
- On 1 August 2017, the Oregon Democratic Senator Ron Wyden introduced bill S.1699, entitled "the United States-Cuba Trade Act of 2017", with the aim of

repealing sanctions against Cuba and establishing normal trade relations between the two countries.

- On 1 August 2017, a bipartisan group of political and business leaders of the State of Kentucky, headed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Ryan Quarles, and businessman Jonathan Blue, launched the Engage Cuba Kentucky State Council. This organization aims to achieve the lifting of the embargo to boost exports by the leading industries of the State, such as agriculture and manufacturing.
- On 26 September 2017, the president of the company Cuban Cultural Travel, Michael Sykes, and the lawyer Dani Pérez, founded an organization called American Tour Operators in Cuba, which brings together more than 50 United States companies involved in the tourism industry in Cuba.
- On 28 October 2017, the fourth meeting of Cubans residing in the United States, held at Howard University in Washington, D.C., with the theme "In defence of national sovereignty and against the blockade", came to a close. It was agreed to encourage city councils and local legislatures to issue statements conducive to the normalization of relations with Cuba, the lifting of the embargo and freedom of travel.
- On 21 February 2018, at a press conference in Havana with other United States congressmen visiting Cuba, the Oregon Democratic Senator Ron Wyden mentioned the bipartisan support for the lifting of the embargo in the United States Congress. He also raised concerns about the return of the Government of President Trump to cold war policies.
- On 1 March 2018, a coalition of 28 tour operators and companies specializing in educational trips to Cuba called for a reduction in restrictions on travel by United States citizens to Cuba in a letter to President Trump.

6.2 Opposition by the international community

The growing and overwhelming support of the international community for Cuba in its call for an end to the embargo is remarkable. In the period covered by this report, many declarations calling for the immediate and unconditional lifting of this policy were made.

Examples include the following:

- On 13 September 2017, at the thirty-sixth regular session of the Human Rights Council, the negative impact of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba was denounced and a call was issued for its full elimination. On that occasion, 24 developing countries and the Group of African States spoke in the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights.
- On 14 September 2017, also at the thirty-sixth regular session of the Human Rights Council, the Council held its biennial panel discussion on the issue of unilateral coercive measures and human rights. In addition to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States, the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Cuba, speaking also on behalf of a group of States, 15 other developing countries made statements. The panellists included the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order and a member of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee.

- In their Ministerial Declaration of 22 September 2017, the ministers for foreign affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China rejected once again the application of the embargo against Cuba and the imposition of unilateral coercive measures against developing countries. The text was adopted at the forty-first annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group, held during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in New York.
- In September 2017, during the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, 37 heads of delegation declared themselves in favour of lifting the embargo.
- On 1 November 2017, the General Assembly adopted, for the twenty-sixth time in succession (see table below), the resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", with 191 votes in favour and only 2 against: the United States and Israel.

Voting in the General Assembly on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, 1992–2017

Year	*In favour*	*Against*	*Abstentions*
1992	59	3	71
1993	88	4	57
1994	101	2	48
1995	117	3	38
1996	137	3	25
1997	143	3	17
1998	157	2	12
1999	155	2	8
2000	167	3	4
2001	167	3	3
2002	173	3	4
2003	179	3	2
2004	179	4	1
2005	182	4	1
2006	183	4	1
2007	184	4	1
2008	185	3	2
2009	187	3	2
2010	187	2	3
2011	186	2	3
2012	188	3	2
2013	188	2	3
2014	188	2	3
2015	191	2	0
2016	191	0	2
2017	191	2	0

- During the debate on the resolution, 41 speakers from all regions of the planet took the floor and called for the immediate lifting of the embargo. These included seven representatives of regional and subregional coordination groups and organizations: the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Group of African States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- On 29 November 2017, the Latin American Council of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, gathered at its ministerial session in Caracas, adopted a declaration on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, in which the United States Government was called upon to comply with the successive resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that regard, to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo that it maintained against Cuba.
- The 106th session of the Council of Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, held in Brussels on 5 and 6 December 2017, adopted a resolution related to the embargo against Cuba, in which the Council reiterated its condemnation of the United States policy and expressed concern about the setting back of the bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States.
- On 30 January 2018, at the thirtieth African Union Summit, the Heads of State and Government adopted a resolution entitled "The lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on the Republic of Cuba by the United States of America". The document concludes with the reaffirmation of the solidarity of the 55 States members of the African Union with Cuba.
- During the eighteenth Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held from 3 to 6 April 2018 in Baku, a number of heads of delegation spoke against the embargo imposed on Cuba, which was once again strongly denounced in the final document adopted.

During the period under review, the website Cuba vs. Bloqueo registered more than 200 statements and complaints against the embargo by solidarity movements, parliaments and parliamentary groups, eminent scientists, activists, friendship associations and Cubans living abroad, non-governmental organizations and local, federal and national Governments from various countries, all of which joined the unanimous rejection of the embargo against Cuba. Some examples are set out below:

- On 11 July 2017, during the twenty-eighth United States-Cuba Friendship Caravan, Pastors for Peace again challenged the immoral United States embargo against Cuba. The members of the Caravan travelled to Cuba without the permission of the Department of the Treasury, thereby running the risk of penalties and fines, and demanded not only that the progress achieved in the previous phase be maintained but also that the ban on free travel by United States citizens to Cuba be lifted.
- On 15 September 2017, a discussion of the impact of the embargo policy against Cuba on the health sector was held at Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. At this event, chants of "Cuba sí, bloqueo no" (Cuba yes, embargo no) and "Viva Cuba" (Long live Cuba) rang out, as the demand of American society to put an end to the embargo against the island.
- On 6 October 2017, the Brazilian Democratic Movement senator Roberto Requião described President Trump's policy towards Cuba as irrational foolishness. The senator, in remarks to the Cuban Prensa Latina press agency, stated that President Trump had created a totally unrealistic theory of alleged

acoustic attacks on the staff of the United States Embassy in Cuba, which makes no sense.

- On 9 October 2017, the Russian cosmonaut, hero of the Russian Federation and deputy of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly Roman Romanenko issued a declaration demanding an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for more than half a century. Mr. Romanenko recalled the appeal from the Duma in plenary session to the General Assembly, the parliaments of the States Members of the United Nations and international parliamentary organizations on the need to end this failed policy, which still persists and harms the Cuban people.

- On 12 October 2017, during the fourth meeting of youth workers of the World Federation of Trade Unions of the Southern Cone, which was held in Argentina and in the presence of more than 450 delegates from eight countries, the World Federation of Trade Unions adopted a resolution condemning the unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo.

- On 22 October 2017, the Nobel peace laureate Rigoberta Menchú expressed her support for an end to the United States embargo on the island, which she described, in her own words, as an act of genocide.

- On 1 November 2017, hours before the historic vote in the General Assembly against the embargo, the Parliament of Jamaica unanimously adopted a motion condemning the obsolete policy that significantly affects the Cuban people. The motion, adopted for the ninth year in succession by Jamaican lawmakers, states that this policy remains the main obstacle to the social and economic development of Cuba.

- On 3 November 2017, the Nobel physics laureate and deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Zhores Alfiorov issued a declaration addressed to the General Assembly and the parliaments of the States Members of the United Nations on the need to eliminate the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

- On 16 March 2018, the social and trade union movements present at the thirteenth World Social Forum in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, demanded an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for more than five decades.

- On 14 April 2018, the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma, condemned the unilateral sanctions and threats of invasion made by the United States Government against Venezuela and demanded the unconditional lifting of the embargo against Cuba, in his address to the Summit of the Americas.

Conclusions

From April 2017 to March 2018, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba intensified and was applied with all possible rigour. This policy continues to be the main obstacle to the development of the Cuban economy and the full enjoyment of all the human rights of the Cuban people, posing a serious challenge to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The tightening of the extraterritorial application of the embargo has unleashed an irrational wave of persecution of Cuban commercial and financial transactions, with reprisals against businesspeople and banking and financial entities that have links with Cuba. The constant harassment of commercial interests and the threats and sanctions against foreign investors reflect the contempt of the United States authorities for international law and the sovereignty of other countries.

The accumulated losses caused by the embargo during the nearly six decades it has been in place amount to $933,678,000,000, taking into account the depreciation of the dollar against the price of gold on the international market. At current prices, the embargo has caused quantifiable losses of more than $134,499,800,000.

During the period under analysis, the embargo has caused Cuba losses of approximately $[illegible],321,200,000.

The regulations and provisions adopted by the United States Departments of the Treasury, State and Commerce in November 2017 to implement the policy of tightening the embargo, announced in June 2017 by President Trump, further restricted the right of United States citizens to travel to Cuba and imposed additional constraints on the already limited opportunities for the United States business sector to trade with Cuba.

The tightening of the financial and banking embargo, which is highly extraterritorial in nature, constitutes an assault on and constant persecution of Cuban financial assets abroad and a growing obstacle to the establishment of normal relations between the Cuban banking system and its foreign counterparts, which has caused serious damage to the country's economy, in particular the business activities of domestic companies and banks in their links with international banking.

The embargo violates international law. It runs counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is a violation of the right to peace, development and self-determination of a sovereign State. It is, in its essence and its aims, a unilateral act of aggression and an ongoing threat to the stability of a country. It also violates the constitutional rights of the people of the United States, by infringing on their freedom to travel to Cuba. It furthermore violates the sovereign rights of many other States owing to its extraterritorial nature.

The Government of the United States must totally eliminate the embargo against Cuba, unilaterally and unconditionally. That would be consistent with the overwhelming demand of the international community and the broad majority of the many and varied voices that, within the United States, call for an end to this unjust policy.

Cuba and its people are confident that they will continue to count on the support of the international community in their legitimate demand to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States Government.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

[Original: English]
[12 April 2018]

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extends its strong commitment and full support in favour of the resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", adopted at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, on 1 November 2017, in accordance with the constant principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China that object to any form of unilateral sanctions.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea condemns the United States embargo against Cuba as an infringement upon sovereignty, a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity, human rights and civilization that plunges the world into medieval darkness.

Diplomatic relations have been established between Cuba and the United States and a new administration has come to power in the United States but nothing has actually changed since then regarding the United States' hostile policy of economic sanctions against Cuba.

Every year for the past 26 years, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions opposing the economic embargo against Cuba but the United States has turned a blind eye to their implementation.

All Member States except the United States and Israel voted in favour of resolution 72/4 and this clearly shows the common stand of the international community that opposes the embargo against Cuba.

However, the United States is ignoring the overwhelming demand of the international community to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The Administration of President Donald Trump has implemented the National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba. This policy is a strengthening of the failed United States embargo policy against Cuba that was started from the very first day of the Republic of Cuba and that to this very day continues to threaten the sovereignty and right to exist and hinders the normal development of the Government and people of Cuba.

All kinds of heinous acts, such as the "Helms-Burton Act", give the United States the ability to impose, in violation of international law, extraterritorial sanctions on any country that has economic and commercial relations with Cuba, something that not only seriously damages Cuba's economy but also that of other countries all across the world.

This proves the hypocrisy of the United States that enforces the implementation of United Nations resolutions, clamouring about "rule of law" and "democracy" and the arbitrary, high-handed and arrogant nature of the "America First" principle that gives priority to its federal laws before the Charter and sacrifices the common good in pursuit of its own interests.

At the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, the resolution was passed by a sweeping vote, as in the past, and that is a manifestation of strong support for and solidarity with the Cuban Government and people's struggle for their righteous cause.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expresses its strong support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba, who fight to defend their national dignity and sovereignty and to achieve unity and cooperation in the region against the unilateral sanctions of the United States.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

[Original: French]
[23 May 2018]

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the importance that the Secretary-General continues to attach to the issue of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of

America against Cuba, despite the many General Assembly resolutions calling for it to be lifted.

The steps taken by the United States to lift certain sanctions, in particular the restrictions on travel for family reasons and on remittances, the authorization for the development of communications services between the two countries and the reopening of the embassies of Cuba and the United States, are greatly welcomed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a path towards full resolution of the issue.

However, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo realigns itself with the will of the international community, expressed on several occasions, in particular through the adoption, on 1 November 2017, of General Assembly resolution 72/4 by 191 States, and supports any new resolution or initiative to engage Cuba and the United States in a constructive and fruitful dialogue to completely end the embargo.

Djibouti

[Original: French]
[28 May 2018]

The Republic of Djibouti wishes to reaffirm its fundamental commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law.

Furthermore, the Republic of Djibouti voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Thus it has not promulgated or applied any laws of the type referred to in the preamble of that resolution and, as such, the necessity of repealing or invalidating any such laws or measures does not arise.

Dominica

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Commonwealth of Dominica has neither promulgated nor applied any law or measure that in any way hinders the freedom of trade and navigation of the Republic of Cuba.

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica unreservedly opposes the extraterritorial enforcement of national legislation that demonstrates disregard for, and undermines the sovereignty of other States, without the authorization of the United Nations. Such unilateral actions are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and customs and the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica has embraced and will continue to embrace the Government and people of the Republic of Cuba as a fellow member of the United Nations, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement and a sister nation of the Caribbean. For over 36 years, the Governments and peoples of both nations have enjoyed strong cultural and political ties and solidarity in a number of areas of cooperation, especially in education, health and sports.

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica reiterates the call for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which has done much damage to the Cuban people over the past 60 years. This is a call for the return to the well-established reliance on dialogue and diplomacy as core strategies for the resolution of outstanding issues between members of the international community.

The Government of Dominica applauds the recent re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. The Government urges that due consideration be given to the recent call by States members of the Caribbean Community and by the vast majority of the international community for an end to the embargo and for dialogue and compromise to be given pride of place in the relations between our two hemispheric neighbours.

Dominican Republic

[Original: Spanish]
[4 June 2018]

The Dominican Republic has reiterated in various international and regional forums that its international relations are governed by the norms and principles of the self-determination of peoples and the sovereignty of States, which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in public international law. Consequently, it will not promulgate, promote or apply any provisions that involve intervening in the internal affairs of other States.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[18 April 2018]

Ecuador has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4. Moreover, it fulfils its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation.

Ecuador traditionally votes in favour of the resolution and participates in the debate to advocate for an end to the unjust embargo which seriously affects the economic and social development of the Cuban people.

Ecuador maintains close economic and commercial ties with Cuba and trade between the two countries has increased in recent years.

On 7 March 2001, Partial Scope Economic Complementarity Agreement No. 46, concluded within the framework of the Latin American Integration Association and signed on 10 May 2000, entered into force. The Agreement is aimed at strengthening reciprocal trade through the granting of tariff and non-tariff preferences.

Egypt

[Original: English]
[22 May 2018]

The Arab Republic of Egypt has voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4, in line with its consistent position that unilateral sanctions imposed outside the framework of the United Nations are not a course of action that Egypt can condone.

The embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba constitutes a clear violation of the principles of multilateralism and is in breach of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as of the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and mutual trust.

The unjust and unjustifiable embargo causes undue economic and social hardship on the Cuban people. It also affects the vital sectors of the Cuban economy. The embargo is an anachronism from a bygone era that must be lifted. The embargo has an extended effect on companies and citizens from third countries. The extraterritorial effects violate the sovereign rights of many Member States. Egypt is deeply concerned over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo, which is an added argument in favour of the prompt elimination of those unjustified sanctions.

Egypt welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States, the historic visit in 2016 by the then-President of the United States to Cuba and the voting record on General Assembly resolution 71/5, with no Member State voting against it.

Egypt also recognizes the advances made in some areas with regard to the regulations issued by the previous Government of the United States. Egypt is hopeful that such steps will pave the way towards the normalization of all aspects of bilateral relations between the two countries.

However, while such advances constituted a step in the right direction, they remain insufficient, as the imposition of the blockade has remained unchanged and the laws and regulations underpinning it continue to be in force and implemented with utmost severity.

Egypt believes that many steps and brave decisions still need to be taken by the United States towards the immediate lifting of the embargo imposed against Cuba to allow for the full normalization of relations between the two countries.

Egypt believes that the embargo continues to be an absurd and morally insupportable policy, which has not served the purpose of breaking the Cuban people's determination to control their own future. And, in spite of all the detrimental repercussions and adverse impacts of the embargo, the Government of Cuba has made enormous efforts in meeting the needs of its people.

What has been proved through over 56 years of embargo against Cuba is that, in this globalized world, the Cuban people can still survive thanks to their perseverance and hope.

Egypt hopes that dialogue between the two countries, based on mutual respect and on observance of the principles of international law and of the Charter, will lead to the immediate lifting of the embargo and the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries in all their aspects.

In this new context, Egypt once again urges the United States to comply immediately and fully with all 26 General Assembly resolutions, which were adopted by the overwhelming majority of the international community, and to put an end to the unjustified embargo, which should never have existed and must cease once and for all.

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[27 April 2018]

The Republic of El Salvador, which is committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, is fully aware of the need to end the unilateral application of economic, commercial and financial measures by one State against another that affect the development of the people of that State, and reaffirms its firm support for the calls to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

It is well known that the embargo against Cuba affects not only its economy but also sectors of vital importance to the Cuban people, such as health, education, food, sports and culture. El Salvador therefore considers the embargo to be a deplorable action that seriously affects the progress and development of a sovereign State.

It is also well known that the mechanisms to implement and tighten the embargo against Cuba constitute grave violations of the principles governing economic, commercial, monetary and financial relations, as well as numerous resolutions of the United Nations and other international bodies.

Cuba continues to be prevented from freely exporting and importing goods and services to and from the United States. It is unable to have direct banking relations with that country or receive United States investment in other sectors of the economy, with the exception of telecommunications. The tightening of the embargo is further reflected in the imposition of fines running into the millions of dollars on banks and financial institutions that maintain links with Cuba, as well as in the bias against international financial transactions that include Cuba.

It should be noted that, despite all the unilateral measures, Cuba, through its perseverance and determination, has managed to overcome the obstacles and adversities facing it, and El Salvador applauds it for the work it has been doing to open up and strengthen its economy and to improve its production processes.

El Salvador considers that unilateral actions such as the embargo imposed on the Cuban people seriously undermine all the efforts being made today by the international community to promote peace; cooperation; development and social justice; human rights; political, economic and social integration; and unity and solidarity among countries.

Lastly, the Republic of El Salvador recognizes the growing strength of the international community's call to lift the embargo against Cuba, and once more joins this call and reiterates the urgent need to end the application of the embargo. Similarly, El Salvador hopes for progress in the relations between Cuba and the United States with a view to advancing the development of both peoples and nations.

Equatorial Guinea

[Original: Spanish]
[21 May 2018]

Through its various statements on the necessity of ending the embargo against Cuba, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has always consistently indicated and insistently focused on the urgent need to end the economic blockade and isolation to which Cuba had been subjected for many years.

Between April 2015 and April 2016 there were very positive developments, including the initiative of the then President of the United States, Barack Obama, to restore diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, and the subsequent reopening of the respective embassies of both countries, in addition to Mr. Obama's visit to Cuba.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea calls for a continuation of this positive trend which sparked great optimism, and for the initiative taken by Mr. Obama to be now supported and consolidated with actions, steps and decisions by the current

Government of the United States that will lead to a complete and irreversible lifting of the embargo against Cuba, in all aspects: economic, commercial and financial.

Such measures would allow Cuba to reach its full development potential in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Eritrea

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Government of the State of Eritrea has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Eritrea remains strongly opposed to the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, which is inconsistent with the principles of international law, and undermines the efforts of Cuba and its people to achieve all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Eritrea joins other States in calling upon the United Sates to immediately repeal or invalidate all laws or measures that continue to adversely impact the livelihoods of the Cuban people and Cuban nationals living in other countries.

Eswatini

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini continues to applaud the major steps taken by the Government of the United States of America in 2016 in working towards cementing a policy shift intended to normalize relations between the two countries, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Eswatini fully supports any such effort and engagement by the United States and Cuba.

It is the Kingdom's prayer that the United States considers the appeal by the international community to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo, thus ensuring that Cuba enjoys all the freedoms, rights and privileges enjoyed by all sovereign nation-States, without any hindrance.

Ethiopia

[Original: English]
[27 April 2018]

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia views the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as a violation of the principles of multilateralism and as a breach of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and of mutual trust.

The unilateral measure of the United States directed against Cuba has caused social and economic problems in Cuba, negatively affecting the living conditions of the Cuban people.

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia therefore wishes to see the embargo lifted in order for the people and Government of Cuba to enjoy their sovereignty in accordance with the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia believes that constructive dialogue is necessary to foster mutual trust and understanding among the nations of the world.

European Union

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

The European Union and its member States believe the unilateral measures of the United States against Cuba should be ended. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States contributes to the economic problems in Cuba, negatively affecting the living standards of the Cuban people and having consequences in the humanitarian field as well. The measures directed against Cuba negatively affect the interests of European Union businesses and citizens, and violate commonly accepted rules of international trade and financial transactions. The introduction by the new United States Administration of new restrictions and the ban on individual self-directed travel from the United States, in particular, curtails the possibility for engagement with the Cuban people, and is also having a negative impact on Cuba's nascent private sector.

The European Union and its Member States have been clearly expressing their opposition to the extraterritorial extension of the United States embargo, such as that contained in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996.

In November 1996, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted a regulation and a joint action to protect the interest of natural or legal persons resident in the European Union against the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton legislation, which prohibits compliance with that legislation. Moreover, on 18 May 1998, at the European Union/United States Summit in London, a package was agreed covering waivers to titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act; a commitment by the United States Administration to resist future extraterritorial legislation of that kind; and an understanding with respect to disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union calls upon the United States to end the embargo and to implement its side of the understanding of 18 May 1998.

It is the conviction of the European Union that positive change in Cuba can be best fostered through closer engagement at the political, but also at the civil society and people-to-people, levels. The European Union-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, which is being provisionally applied since 1 November 2017, provides a framework to support economic and social reforms, sustainable development and common solutions to global challenges, while it enables the European Union to continue promoting democracy and respect for human rights.

Fiji

[Original: English]
[22 May 2018]

In relation to General Assembly resolution 72/4, calling for ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, the Government of Fiji reaffirms its support for the resolution.

The Government of Fiji reiterates its position that all States should refrain from imposing economic sanctions of the nature referred to in the resolution, thereby conforming to the obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

The Government of Fiji wishes to reaffirm that it has not taken any measures that might impair economic, commercial or financial relations between Cuba and Fiji. On the contrary, Fiji is intent on developing cooperative relations with all countries and in this regard fully supports the call for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba.

Gabon

[Original: French]
[1 May 2018]

The Government of Gabon reiterates its commitment to peace through the peaceful settlement of disputes. Gabon voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and previous resolutions in accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of that instrument, which are based on cooperation among States and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

It remains concerned about the maintenance of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and its adverse effects on the Cuban people, including Cuban nationals living in other countries.

Gabon expresses its strong hope that the United Nations resolutions echoing the collective call for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba will be respected and implemented, thus allowing Cuba to participate in and benefit from international trade.

Gabon also calls on the international community to continue its efforts to ensure that relations between the two countries are normalized.

Gambia

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Government of the Gambia has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4. Accordingly, the Gambia is opposed to the continued enactment or application of such laws, acts or measures against Cuba that impede the free flow of international trade and navigation. The embargo against Cuba contravenes the fundamental principles of international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, violating the sovereign equality of States and the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other Member States. The embargo has no legitimate or moral justification given the fact that it continues to undermine the essential rights to economic emancipation and to development of the Cuban people; it must come to an immediate end.

As a responsible member of the international community, the Gambia therefore joins other Member States in calling for the immediate repeal or invalidation of laws, measures or policies that impede the free flow of international trade and navigation as they are contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law.

It is our fervent desire that the relevant United Nations resolutions echoing collective concerns on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba will be respected and implemented.

Georgia

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

Georgia reaffirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4. Georgia has not promulgated or applied laws or taken measures against Cuba that would prohibit or restrict economic, commercial or financial relations between Cuba and Georgia.

Ghana

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Ghana remains fully committed to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and to the established principles of international law, which underscore the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the right of States to choose their own political, economic, cultural and social systems.

For this reason, and in solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba, Ghana has, over the years, consistently supported the yearly resolutions of the General Assembly calling for the unconditional lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba, that continues to militate against the legitimate political, social and economic aspirations of the island State and its peoples.

Furthermore, the Government of Ghana has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Ghana is of the view that the continued imposition of the economic, financial and trade embargo impedes the attainment of the fundamental rights of the Cuban people to development, including the right to food, medical care and social services, especially for the most vulnerable, including women and children.

Ghana expresses once again its continued solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba and urges the United States to heed calls by the international community to lift its embargo against Cuba in order to enable the country to achieve its full potential among the community of nations.

Grenada

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

Grenada unreservedly advocates adherence to the principles of the United Nations. These principles, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, preclude the escalation of conflict and suffering by promoting multilateralism and are essential to building a more peaceful world.

Consequently, Grenada avoids unilateral measures that encroach on or undermine the sovereign rights of any State, or measures that restrict and hinder international trade and/or navigation. Therefore, Grenada reiterates its call for the removal of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on the Government and people of Cuba.

Grenada views the reversal of rapprochement efforts between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba as unfortunate, and thus urges both parties to return to good-faith dialogue. Grenada is concerned that the embargo contravenes the spirit of the United Nations and impedes the achievement of the human development goals that are essential to the peaceful and prosperous world we all seek.

Grenada therefore supports General Assembly resolution 72/4 which encourages strict compliance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter and speaks to the necessity of ending the embargo.

Guatemala

[Original: Spanish]
[7 May 2018]

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/4, Guatemala has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures contrary to the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations or to the freedom of international trade and navigation.

Guatemala rejects any unilateral measures that run counter to the principles of free trade and international law and urges those countries that continue to maintain such provisions in their domestic legislation to take the necessary steps to repeal or rescind them.

Consequently, there are no legal or regulatory impediments to free transit or trade between Guatemala and Cuba.

In the light of recent developments relating to the embargo against Cuba, Guatemala is concerned that the progress achieved since 2014 has been reversed as a result of the new measures to tighten the current embargo which have been imposed by means of the National Security Presidential Memorandum on strengthening the policy of the United States of America towards Cuba, signed on 16 June 2017.

Guatemala reiterates and makes a strong call for the restoration of a fruitful dialogue between the two parties to ensure the rapid normalization of their diplomatic, economic, commercial and financial relations.

In addition, it continues to join the international community in supporting and promoting the firm objective of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Guinea

[Original: French]
[30 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Guinea expresses its grave concern at the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

The embargo has continued for many years, despite all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and this constitutes a real obstacle to the socioeconomic development of Cuba.

It is also clear that the trade policy of the United States with regard to Cuba presents a severe challenge to regional and international relations of cooperation, a dramatic consequence of which is the deterioration in the living conditions of Cuban families.

In this regard, in keeping with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the Republic of Guinea reaffirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017.

Guinea-Bissau

[Original: French]
[7 May 2018]

Guinea-Bissau reaffirms that discriminatory trade practices and the extraterritorial application of national laws are contrary to the need to promote dialogue and to uphold the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Government of Guinea-Bissau has not endorsed any resolutions against Cuba and has adopted no internal mechanisms for their implementation, as they are unilateral and contrary to the norms of international law, in particular with regard to freedom of trade and navigation.

Guinea-Bissau regrets that this embargo, which has been in place for more than 57 years, continues to cause the Cuban people significant harm in all major sectors of the Cuban economy, such as public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as banking, trade, investment and tourism.

In addition, this decades-long blockade has prevented socioeconomic development and, for as long as it continues, will obstruct the efforts of Cuba to achieve sustainable development, despite the significant progress made by the Governments of the United States and Cuba in normalizing their bilateral relations.

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau recognizes the importance attached by the Secretary-General to this issue and calls for the implementation of resolution 72/4.

It also calls upon the international community to redouble its efforts to ensure that the two countries reach an agreement through constructive dialogue, in order to deepen relations between them.

Guyana

[Original: English]
[22 May 2018]

The Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana has consistently demonstrated its unwavering respect for, and adherence to, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including those stated in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Accordingly, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana has not enacted any legislation or adopted any policies and practices the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States. Furthermore, the Government is in full compliance with and remains fully supportive of General Assembly resolution 72/4.

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana has, as a matter of principle, maintained a consistent position of firm opposition to the economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and reiterates the call for an end to this oppressive policy. The Cooperative Republic of Guyana encourages constructive dialogue between the United States and Cuba as a means of building trust and ultimately leading to a complete normalization of relations between the two countries.

The Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana was encouraged by earlier steps taken by the Government of the United States and the Government of Cuba to remove impediments inhibiting friendly relations between the two countries and notes with regret that these efforts were not sustained.

The Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana expresses the hope that the two Governments will work towards a permanent resolution of this long-standing issue.

Haiti

[Original: French]
[27 April 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Haiti has never promulgated any laws, legal provisions or measures of the kind referred to in resolution 72/4, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2017, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

The Republic of Haiti reaffirms its commitment and adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference and non-intervention in their internal affairs and the right of States and their nationals to freely enjoy the benefits of the freedom of navigation and trade. There is a need for States to act in accordance with those principles of international law by renouncing unilateral measures that can affect the social, economic and financial structures of other States.

On the basis of those principles, the Government of Haiti has always supported the efforts undertaken by its sister republic of Cuba regarding the urgent necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo, which has affected that country for many years, within the United Nations and at various summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

The Government of the Republic of Haiti therefore welcomes the progress made in bilateral relations between the United States and Cuba and hopes that such progress may lead the new United States Administration to lift the economic and financial embargo imposed on Cuba.

Honduras

[Original: Spanish]
[22 May 2018]

In accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Honduras has not promulgated or applied any unilateral economic or commercial laws or measures against other States that might affect the free flow of international trade.

Iceland

[Original: English]
[4 May 2018]

The Government of Iceland reaffirms its position in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4. Iceland neither promulgates nor applies any laws or measures referred to in resolution 72/4. Iceland does not apply trade or economic legislation against Cuba that restricts or discourages trade with or investment in Cuba. Iceland opposes the extraterritorial extension of unilateral measures against a third country.

India

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

India has not promulgated or applied any laws of the type referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4 and, as such, the necessity of repealing or invalidating any such laws or measures does not arise.

India has consistently opposed any unilateral measure by countries that impinge on the sovereignty of another country. These include any attempt to extend the application of a country's laws extraterritorially to other sovereign nations.

India recalls the Final Documents adopted by the Seventeenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held on Margarita Island, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) from 17 to 18 September 2016 on this subject and the Santa Cruz Declaration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77, as well as other high-level decisions of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and urges the international community to adopt all necessary measures to protect the sovereign rights of all countries.

Indonesia

[Original: English]
[23 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia consistently expresses its strong opposition to unilateral embargoes and extraterritorial coercive measures against the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interest of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia reaffirms its fundamental belief that the continued imposition of the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba violates the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, which are enshrined in many international legal instruments, including the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States.

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia asserts that such an embargo defies the spirit of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which urges States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral, economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter that impede the full achievement of economic and social development.

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia expresses its serious concerns that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba has continued to cause significant economic and social hardship as regards the well-being of the people of Cuba, in particular those in vulnerable situations, including women, children and older persons.

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia underlines the importance of enhanced dialogue with a view to ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba and towards normalization of relations.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

[Original: English]
[25 May 2018]

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its strong opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba, as well as to the extraterritorial application of United States domestic laws and the adoption of discriminatory trade practices. Hence, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not applied nor promulgated any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Moreover, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its serious dismay at the continued economic, commercial and financial sanctions against Cuba, despite the annual adoption of a General Assembly resolution calling for the lifting of, and putting an end to, the embargo against Cuba by the Government of the United States of America.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its conviction that the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of international law governing relations among States and contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter, which calls for promoting solidarity, cooperation and friendly relations among nations.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba, which has lasted for decades, continues to adversely affect the living conditions and human rights of the Cuban people and will hamper the efforts of the Government of Cuba to achieve sustainable development. Such measures serve no purpose other than inflicting tremendous hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba, especially women and children. The embargo has seriously jeopardized the legitimate rights and interests of Cuba and other States, as well as the freedom of trade and navigation, and therefore has to be immediately lifted as requested in all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

The adoption of the General Assembly resolution, with such a wide range of support and over so many years, clearly indicates the strong objection of the international community to unilateral economic coercive measures in general, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba in particular. It is also a sign of sympathy with the aspiration of the Government and people of Cuba to put an end to this unlawful and inhumane embargo.

As the international community is facing major challenges, such as food insecurity and malnutrition, environmental degradation, increased poverty and unemployment, the imposition of the embargo seems unjustifiable more than ever and deserves stronger objections at the international level.

The Islamic Republic of Iran urges the States Members of the United Nations to adopt all necessary measures to put an end to this inhumane embargo against the people and the Government of Cuba and to protect the sovereign right of all other countries to expand trade and economic relations with Cuba.

The Islamic Republic of Iran remains opposed to the application of unilateral economic and trade measures by the United States against other countries that block the flow of people, trade and finance, as well as to the extraterritorial application and effects of such national legislation on the sovereignty of other States. Such unilateral coercive measures are contrary to the principles of international law, the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and peaceful coexistence among States.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has long been subject to economic coercive measures, shares the concern of the Government and people of Cuba and therefore emphasizes the urgent need to put an end to such measures and to fully implement the content of General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Iraq

[Original: Arabic]
[21 May 2018]

- In keeping with its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolutions and its respect for the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of trade and navigation for all States, Iraq supports all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.
- Iraq declares its solidarity with Cuba and its full support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination and its sovereign right to benefit from the use of its land and territorial waters without economic restrictions.
- Iraq rejects illegal economic measures that affect vulnerable population groups, in particular children, women, the elderly and the sick, hinder development and constitute an obstacle to efforts to eradicate poverty in Cuba.
- Iraq welcomes any diplomatic mediation efforts to bring the United States and Cuba together around the negotiating table to engage in dialogue leading to an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba and the normalization of relations between the two countries, allowing the Cubans to again freely engage in trade and economic activity and thereby fulfilling the goals and purposes of the United Nations with regard to achieving sustainable development for all peoples, without exception.

Jamaica

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Government of Jamaica remains fully committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, the principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

In keeping with the obligations under the Charter and under international law, and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/4, the Government of Jamaica has not promulgated any legislation or measure that would infringe on the sovereignty of any State or its lawful national interests.

Jamaica agrees with other States Members of the United Nations that the imposition of unilateral extraterritorial laws is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter and undermines the principles of multilateralism, sovereignty and free trade.

Jamaica remains concerned with the impact of the decision by the United States Government to reapply restrictive measures under the National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Against Cuba, of June 2017.

Jamaica's strong advocacy for Cuba to be fully reintegrated into the hemisphere is based on its view that the embargo is not only a punitive measure against Cuba, but it is an impediment to our shared regional development.

In keeping with this stance, action has been taken at the national level, and in October 2017, Jamaica's Parliament again approved a resolution in full support of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

At the multilateral level, Jamaica has consistently supported General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 72/4, calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, and urges all Member States to uphold the Charter by ceasing the application of such inimical measures.

Within regional forums, Jamaica continues to advocate for the removal of the embargo against Cuba, including at the Sixth Caribbean Community-Cuba Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in December 2017, when leaders restated their rejection of the imposition of unilateral and coercive measures.

Jamaica reiterates its call for the United States to take the necessary steps towards the complete and immediate removal of the embargo which continues to have dire social and economic effects on Cuba and its people.

Japan

[Original: English]
[25 April 2018]

The Government of Japan has not promulgated or applied laws or measures of the kind that are referred to in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 72/4.

The Government of Japan believes that the economic policy of the United States towards Cuba should be considered primarily as a bilateral issue. However, Japan shares the concern, arising from the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 (known as the Helms-Burton Act) and the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, that, if application of such legislation causes undue hardship in relation to the economic activities of the enterprises or nationals of a third party, the legislation is likely to run counter to international law regarding the extraterritorial application of domestic laws.

The Government of Japan has been closely following the situation in relation to the above-mentioned legislation and the surrounding circumstances, and its concern remains unchanged. Having considered the matter with the utmost care, Japan voted in favour of resolution 72/4.

Jordan

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has not applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has consistently voted in favour of resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and reaffirms its commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan

[Original: English]
[4 May 2018]

Kazakhstan is guided by the principles of international law in its foreign policy and stands for the rights of nations to develop in accordance with their own vision.

Kazakhstan strongly condemns any unilateral acts that infringe the sovereignty of other States.

Kazakhstan has never adopted any national regulations that prevent the development of foreign countries, including in the economic, commercial and financial spheres.

In this regard, Kazakhstan, like the overwhelming majority of the international community, calls for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba and the cessation of all acts that are contrary to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Kenya

[Original: English]
[27 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Kenya reaffirms and reiterates its objection to the unilateral coercive measures that are at variance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Kenya has never unilaterally promulgated or applied laws or measures of any kind that have extraterritorial effects affecting the sovereignty of other States. The majority of the States Members of the United Nations and member States of other international organizations have called for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Kenya believes in and upholds the principles of maintaining friendly relations, including commerce, among all nations for the promotion of peace and security, as indispensable ingredients for the social and economic advancement of all people.

Kenya will continue to oppose the blockade against Cuba which has negatively affected the citizens of Cuba and, in line with the position of the African Union, calls for the immediate lifting of the long-standing and unjustifiable economic and trade embargo imposed on Cuba, so as to allow that country to enjoy all the legitimate prospects for its sustained development. The Government of the Republic of Kenya has always voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba.

The Government of Kenya welcomes and supports the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America as a positive step towards the normalization of relations.

To reiterate Kenya's solidarity and support for Cuba, the President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, officially opened Kenya's embassy in Havana during his State visit from 15 to 17 March 2018, even though the diplomatic mission has existed since 16 September 2016.

Kiribati

[Original: English]
[8 June 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Kiribati reaffirms its support for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, has not taken any measures that might impair economic, commercial or financial relations between Kiribati and Cuba or any other country for that matter.

The resolution addresses moral and humanitarian considerations which, when implemented, will positively contribute to improving the general welfare and well-being of the people of Cuba.

Kuwait

[Original: English]
[5 June 2018]

The State of Kuwait supports the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/4, with an emphasis on the need to comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the sovereign equality of States and the non-interference in their internal affairs, as well as the freedom of international trade and navigation.

Furthermore, the State of Kuwait has always voted in favour of the resolutions of the General Assembly calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba.

Kyrgyzstan

[Original: Russian]
[1 June 2018]

In its foreign policy, the Kyrgyz Republic strictly adheres to the fundamental norms and principles of international law, including the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and advocates respect for the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Kyrgyz Republic has not enacted or passed any of the laws or measures against the Republic of Cuba that were referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

[Original: English]
[8 May 2018]

The Lao People's Democratic Republic would like to reaffirm its position that an embargo, with its extraterritorial implications, not only hinders the socioeconomic development of a nation, but it also contradicts the principles and the purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the sovereign equality of States, as well as freedom of international trade and navigations. As such, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has neither promulgated nor applied laws and measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

The imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo on the Republic of Cuba by the United States not only violates international law, but it also imposes severe restrictions and obstacles to the socioeconomic development of Cuba. Against this backdrop, the Lao People's Democratic Republic calls for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba at the earliest.

Lebanon

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

The Government of Lebanon fully complies with General Assembly resolution 72/4 concerning the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and international law.

Lesotho

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

The Kingdom of Lesotho reaffirms its commitment to the provisions and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, provide for sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of the other States and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Kingdom of Lesotho is deeply concerned about the harmful effects of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. In this regard, Lesotho calls upon the United States to lift the embargo imposed against Cuba.

Liberia

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

The Government of Liberia remains committed to the call to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba.

We recall the overwhelming support for the resolutions on this matter adopted by the General Assembly, particularly in 2017, when 191 out of 193 Member States voted in favour of resolution 72/4 and the lifting of the blockade.

Today, Liberia still views this call prudent and further envisages the normalization and strengthening of relations between the United States and Cuba.

Libya

[Original: Arabic]
[19 June 2018]

Libya voted in favour of resolution 72/4 because it opposes the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. It calls on States to resolve their differences by peaceful means and to shun coercive unilateral measures, which violate the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and human rights and impede efforts to achieve development, which is one of the lofty objectives of the United Nations.

Libya reiterates its strong opposition to unilateral measures imposed on States for political purposes, and stresses that such conduct does not help to resolve differences between States but, rather, complicates and deepens them.

Libya has consistently expressed its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. It has never enacted or applied any laws of the kind referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Libya does not support the application of coercive unilateral extraterritorial economic measures, as they clearly violate the principles of international law.

Liechtenstein

[Original: English]
[6 April 2018]

The Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein is furthermore of the view that legislation whose implementation entails measures or regulations having extraterritorial effects is inconsistent with generally recognized principles of international law.

Madagascar

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Republic of Madagascar has never promulgated nor applied laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation.

In this connection, the Republic of Madagascar reiterates its support for all measures adopted with a view to ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

Malawi

[Original: English]
[9 July 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Malawi, which has diplomatic relations with Cuba, has never promulgated country-specific targeted legislation or instructions barring trade or cooperation with Cuba. As such, following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/4, there is not much to be done to comply with it in terms of the law.

Malaysia

[Original: English]
[31 May 2018]

Malaysia reaffirms its support to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017. Malaysia remains opposed to all forms of unilateral economic financial and commercial embargo that contravene the norms of international law and purpose of the Charter of the United Nations. Malaysia urges an end to the unilateral embargo against Cuba, which has impeded the nation's development and caused significant amount of suffering to the Cuban people.

Maldives

[Original: English]
[31 May 2018]

The Republic of Maldives is against imposing any kind of sanctions against any country without an explicit mandate from the Security Council. As such, the Republic of Maldives has not imposed any sanctions on Cuba nor has it enacted any laws or regulations that would contravene the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/4, in support of which the Republic of Maldives had voted.

Mali

[Original: French]
[8 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Mali has always voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

The Government of the Republic of Mali, which fully supports General Assembly resolution 72/4, adopted by the Assembly on 1 November 2017, has not promulgated any laws or applied any measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to that resolution.

As in the past, Mali maintains its position that the embargo against Cuba should be lifted.

Mauritania

[Original: French]
[20 June 2018]

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania disagrees with and is opposed to all aspects of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania remains committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of trade and navigation.

Mauritius

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

Mauritius reiterates its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle of the sovereign equality of States, and non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs. In line with the above principles, and in conformity with international law, Mauritius has not promulgated any law or measure aimed at imposing a unilateral economic, commercial or financial embargo against Cuba.

The Republic of Mauritius enjoys good bilateral relations with Cuba and remains open to developing its trade relations with the Republic of Cuba.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2018]

Mexico is convinced that neighbourly relations on the continent will improve if ties are forged that are in line with current times and that facilitate close interaction among peoples and understanding among Governments. Today's world requires greater openness, more bridge-building and ever-freer movement of people, goods, technologies and ideas.

Accordingly, Mexico has reiterated, on many occasions, its firm and resolute rejection of discriminatory national trade laws that are designed to be applied extraterritorially. The application of unilateral measures by a State to effect political, economic or social change in another State runs contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, in particular the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

Mexico welcomed the start of the process of normalizing relations between Cuba and the United States of America. The Bilateral Commission has met six times, including under the current United States Administration.

As a result of this rapprochement, significant joint progress has been made in areas such as the environment, communications and transport, agriculture, health, the prevention of oil spills, migration, search and rescue operations and law enforcement cooperation, all areas of mutual interest to both countries as well as to Mexico, which shares maritime and airspace borders with the two countries. The discussions that have taken place between Cuba and the United States on the fight against terrorism and human trafficking, regulatory issues, human rights and migration are evidence that they could enjoy a relationship based on frank and constructive dialogue, which would benefit both sides.

Mexico supports the process of updating the Cuban economic and social model by providing technical assistance, an exchange of experiences and training on the formulation and evaluation of public policies.

In 2018, Mexico became the second most important trading partner of Cuba in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba is the third most important trading partner of Mexico in the Caribbean. In 2017, the two countries' bilateral trade reached US$ 369.9 million: Mexican exports amounted to US$ 361.2 million, while imports from Cuba amounted to US$ 8.7 million.

A total of 31 Mexican companies took part in the thirty-fifth Havana International Fair, held in October and November 2017, and seven Cuban businesses participated in the international business forum between Mexico and the Wider Caribbean (Cancun Forum), held in September 2017.

Over the past three years, Cuba and Mexico have signed 15 legal instruments, the most recent being the Agreement on Cooperation, Mutual Administrative Assistance and Information Exchange on Customs Matters, signed on 21 April 2018 in Los Cabos, Mexico, at the thirty-ninth Meeting of National Customs Directors of Latin America, Spain and Portugal.

The Government of Mexico supports domestic exports to Cuba through letters of credit issued by the National Bank of Cuba and guaranteed by the National Bank of Foreign Trade of Mexico, made out to the Mexican companies in question.

Since opening an office in Havana in 2014, ProMéxico has guided and supported Mexican companies that have investment projects in Cuba, specifically in the Mariel special development zone.

As part of the relaunch of relations between Mexico and Cuba, agreed to by President Enrique Peña Nieto and the then President of Cuba, Raúl Castro, in January 2013, and following the updating and deepening of the Economic Complementarity Agreement No. 51 between Mexico and Cuba in November 2013, the Secretary of the Economy, Ildefonso Guajardo, visited Havana on 15 and 16 June 2017, accompanied by a large delegation of businesspersons and representatives of ProMéxico. The purpose of the visit was to increase significantly bilateral trade, boost investment and enhance development cooperation and the exchange of experiences.

During the visit, the benefits of updating the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, which has been in force since 2002, were discussed, with a view to taking advantage of the current legal framework in Cuba and drawing on the experiences of investors in both countries; the updated Agreement revises the status of Mexican companies with investments in Cuba and sets out the investment potential and trade opportunities in the agriculture sector, in particular fertilizers and the industrialization of the sugar, pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors, building on the great strides made by Cuba in those areas. In addition, the delegation visited the BioCubaFarma research centre to learn about successful practices used in the Cuban health-care system that could benefit the people of Mexico, such as medication and treatment protocols developed by Cuba that are recognized at the global level as being innovative and effective.

Economic relations between Cuba and Mexico is part of a broad, comprehensive agenda that has expanded into all areas. President Raúl Castro undertook a State visit to Mexico in November 2015 and President Enrique Peña Nieto travelled to Cuba in January 2014 and November 2016. The foreign ministers of Mexico and Cuba have met nine times, and there have been close to 30 reciprocal visits by high-level officials.

The Standing Mexico-Cuba Information and Consultation Mechanism has met six times, most recently in August 2017 in Havana and in May 2018 in Mexico City. The Mexico-Cuba Working Group, which coordinates economic, educational and cultural relations and technical and scientific cooperation, has met four times, most recently in January and February 2018 in Havana.

Our region has been strengthened by the accession of Cuba to continental forums for dialogue and cooperation. Ending the embargo will contribute to its full economic integration, which would benefit the entire region.

The removal of the economic, commercial and financial embargo will promote the restructuring of the Cuban economy, naturally facilitating trade and investment flows in the region, and could assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the full attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby benefiting the Cuban people.

Monaco

[Original: French]
[16 April 2018]

Pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the general principles of international law, the Principality of Monaco has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4 adopted by the Assembly on 1 November 2017.

Mongolia

[Original: English]
[24 May 2018]

In accordance with paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 72/4, the Government of Mongolia has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to the aforementioned resolution.

Mongolia reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular the principle of sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Government of Mongolia has consistently opposed the continued application of unilateral measures that are the main obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development and reiterates its unconditional support for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

Montenegro

[Original: English]
[19 June 2018]

Montenegro supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/4, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Montenegro has not adopted or implemented any laws, policies or measures referred to in resolution 72/4, and the Government of Montenegro remains committed to developing cooperation with Cuba, at bilateral and multilateral levels.

Morocco

[Original: French]
[26 June 2018]

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the cardinal principles of international law.

The Kingdom of Morocco has always encouraged the development of friendly relations between States Members of the United Nations.

Mozambique

[Original: English]
[17 May 2018]

The Republic of Mozambique has never promulgated, applied or contributed to the application of any of the laws or regulations of the kind mentioned in General Assembly resolution 72/4. It was in this context that the Republic of Mozambique voted in favour of the aforementioned resolution.

The Republic of Mozambique reiterates its unconditional support for the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and appeals to the United Nations to ensure that all Member States take the resolution into consideration.

Myanmar

[Original: English]
[4 June 2018]

During the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, Myanmar once again joined the international community and voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4, calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

Myanmar believes in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and good-neighbourliness. Nations should be guided by the principles enshrined in those guidelines to coexist, respect differences, promote prosperity and ensure safety. Myanmar stresses the need to normalize the relations between the United States and Cuba. We hope that this will lead to the eventual lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

In November 2017, 191 Member States voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4. The end of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba will benefit not only the Cuban people and the United States, but also the entire international community. For these reasons, Myanmar has joined the international community and voted in favour of resolution 72/4.

Namibia

[Original: English]
[10 May 2018]

Namibia strongly supports General Assembly resolution 72/4 and calls for an immediate and unconditional lifting of the embargo against the Republic of Cuba, in conformity with the obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. As it has done every year, Namibia supports, and will continue to support, the call by the General Assembly to remove the embargo against the people of Cuba. Namibia has not promulgated or applied any laws and measures to support such an embargo.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia upholds the principle of peaceful coexistence of nations, respects the sovereign equality of States, and believes in fair and open trade among nations. Since attaining independence, Namibia has taken steps to strengthen trade relations with Cuba, and Cuba continues to provide expertise to Namibia in the fields of health, agriculture, aquaculture and education.

Since the previous reporting period, several high-level visits and conferences have taken place between Namibia and Cuba, in order to further cement the excellent relations between the two countries. Among others, exchanges of visits included the following:

- Official visit by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, to the Republic of Cuba, from 12 to 19 February 2018
- Official visit to Namibia by a hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Vice-President of the Superior Organization for Entrepreneurial Management, Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez, 16 November 2017
- Hosting of the fifth Continental African Conference on Solidarity with Cuba from 5 to 7 June 2017, Windhoek. The objectives of the Conference were to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the people of Cuba and progressive peoples throughout the world; to recognize the important work done in support of Cuba based on its acts of solidarity; to discuss priorities as regards acts of solidarity and to strengthen the bonds between partner organizations on the continent; to agree on new strategies and work together on a greater scope for lifting the blockade of the United States Government against Cuba; to reaffirm the historical and cultural links between the peoples of Africa and Cuba and to deepen the knowledge of African reality and culture in its relationship with Cuba
- Third session of the Namibia-Cuba Joint Working Group was held on 18 and 19 December 2017 in Windhoek.

Nauru

[Original: English]
[30 April 2018]

The Government of Nauru is deeply committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including in particular, the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation, as established by international law.

The Government of Nauru further reaffirms its full support and observance for General Assembly resolution 72/4 on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Furthermore, Nauru has not promulgated or applied laws or measures against Cuba that would prohibit economic, commercial or financial relations between the Republic of Nauru and the Republic of Cuba.

Nepal

[Original: English]
[16 May 2018]

The Government of Nepal has firmly adhered to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures contrary to the resolution.

New Zealand

[Original: English]
[10 April 2018]

The Government of New Zealand reaffirms its position in support of General Assembly resolution 72/4. The Government of New Zealand has consistently supported General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the trade embargo against Cuba. We reiterate those calls. New Zealand has no trade or economic legislation or measures that restrict or discourage trade with Cuba or investment in or from that country, and welcomes all steps towards normalization, including lifting the embargo.

Nicaragua

[Original: Spanish]
[23 May 2018]

Nicaragua reiterates its firm and unwavering respect for the sovereign equality of States, the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation, as set forth in various international instruments, as well as other principles that are essential to coexistence and peace. It also reiterates the right of every State to choose its own political, economic and social system free from outside interference, coercive economic measures, sanctions or embargoes.

Nicaragua greatly welcomed the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States. In this regard, it is of great concern that the new provisions and regulations to implement the measures announced by the current United States Administration have meant a serious setback in their bilateral relations and a tightening of the embargo and its extraterritorial effects.

Nicaragua once again expresses its unconditional solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba and states again that it has not promulgated, nor will it promulgate, any laws affecting the economic, commercial and financial rights of the brotherly people and Government of Cuba, and that it has not applied, nor will it apply, any measures that might impose restrictions on trade or any other type of relations with Cuba. Rather, we have continued to expand and strengthen our bilateral relations and cooperation.

The embargo should be lifted without conditions, much less demands aimed at changing the political, economic, social, legal and constitutional order of Cuba. The international community has expressed its absolute rejection of the embargo through the vote of 191 of its 193 members.

The Government of Nicaragua appeals for respect and compliance with United Nations resolutions and calls upon the Government of the United States to put an end to this policy against Cuba, in order to lay the foundations for an understanding to strengthen good-neighbourliness and cooperation among peoples and Governments.

Niger

[Original: French]
[8 May 2018]

The Government of the Niger is deeply committed to respecting the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, and freedom of international trade and navigation, as established in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and has not taken any measures that run counter to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/4.

On the contrary, the Republic of the Niger and the Republic of Cuba have maintained good cooperative relations since the signing of a general agreement on cooperation between the two countries in 1994. Since then, the scope of this cooperation and the activities covered by it have evolved and expanded. The two countries regularly hold bilateral consultations, thereby attesting to the political will of their leaders to strengthen the ties of cooperation and solidarity between them for the benefit of their peoples. In addition, the President of the Republic, Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, conducted an official visit to Cuba in September 2014 to consolidate that cooperation.

However, the economic, commercial and financial embargo remains in place and continues to inflict dreadful pain on the Cuban people, thereby hampering their economic development.

The Niger therefore calls for the lifting of the embargo, which represents a key prerequisite for the gradual normalization of relations between the United States of America and Cuba and will give meaning, depth and stability to what has already been achieved, namely the restoration of diplomatic relations in 2015 and the abstention by the United States of America during the vote on General Assembly resolution 71/5.

For all the above reasons, the Republic of the Niger remains in solidarity with and provides growing support to the sister republic of Cuba, and hopes to be able to count once again on the support of the international community to secure the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo.

Nigeria

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

The Federal Government of Nigeria maintains friendly relations with all States and does not favour unilateral measures to settle political disputes. Consequently, Nigeria reiterates its support for ending the embargo against Cuba. Nigeria is optimistic that the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States during the previous Administration was a step in the right direction towards ending the embargo.

Norway

[Original: English]
[28 May 2018]

The Government of Norway reaffirms its position in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4. Norway does not promulgate or apply laws and measures of the kind referred to in the resolution. Norway does not apply trade or economic legislation that restricts or discourages trade with or investment in or from Cuba. Norway opposes the extraterritorial extension of unilateral measures against a third country.

Norway encourages the United States and Cuba to normalize bilateral relations with a view to bringing about the end of the embargo against Cuba.

Oman

[Original: English]
[31 May 2018]

The Government of Oman complies with and implements General Assembly resolution 72/4 and does not apply any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to said resolution

Pakistan

[Original: English]
[31 May 2018]

Pakistan is fully in observance of General Assembly resolution 72/4, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[30 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Panama, taking into consideration the positive developments in economic relations and, in this framework, the conclusion of trade agreements with the Republic of Cuba, which contribute to the easing of the trade, financial and economic restrictions against it, reaffirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

As a founding Member of the United Nations and a State that advocates peace, Panama maintains relations of friendship and cooperation with all States on the basis of inclusion and respect for the principles of justice and international law, as well as respect for the self-determination of peoples, respect for sovereignty and non-intervention in matters that lie essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States.

As a country that promotes dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as free trade and transparency in international commerce, the Republic of Panama has historically voted in favour of the draft resolution that supports the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, a commitment which is renewed, in order to support an end to the embargo against that country. The Republic of Panama reiterates its support for the lifting of the embargo, on the understanding that it would contribute to the full economic integration of the Republic of Cuba into the region, and for the preparation of a comprehensive report on the implementation of resolution 72/4.

Papua New Guinea

[Original: English]
[8 May 2018]

The Government of Papua New Guinea is firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular, the fundamental principles of the sovereign equality of States and respect for non-interference in the internal sovereign affairs of other Member States. Papua New Guinea is therefore opposed to the extraterritorial application of laws and regulations that infringe on the sovereignty of other Member States.

In this spirit, Papua New Guinea continues to strengthen cordial and constructive cooperative relations with Cuba and therefore has no restrictive legislative, policy or other measures against Cuba.

Papua New Guinea further reaffirms its continued support for General Assembly resolution 72/4, which stresses the imperative to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Paraguay

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2018]

The Republic of Paraguay fully complies with General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and has not applied any measures or laws of the kind indicated in that resolution.

The Republic of Paraguay does not recognize in its legislation the extraterritorial application of domestic laws that violate the sovereignty of other States. This practice undermines the principles of international law.

In its foreign policy, Paraguay, as a founding Member of the United Nations, defends and upholds the constitutional principles that govern its international relations, in accordance with article 143 of its Constitution: national independence, the self-determination of peoples, the legal equality of States, solidarity and international cooperation, international protection of human rights, free navigation on international rivers, non-intervention and condemnation of all forms of dictatorship, colonialism and imperialism.

Similarly, Paraguay upholds Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations on the purposes and principles of developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and for the general principles of international law, considering that the extraterritorial application of domestic laws infringes on the sovereignty of other States, the legal equality of States and the principle of non-intervention, also affecting international free trade and navigation.

Within the United Nations, Paraguay has consistently supported General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and has repeatedly expressed its opposition thereto, as have the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, with whom it has called for an immediate end to the embargo.

Peru

[Original: Spanish]
[24 May 2018]

Peru reiterates its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, particularly the sovereign equality of States, freedom of international trade and navigation, non-intervention and non-interference in a State's internal affairs, and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Peru considers that the extraterritorial application of domestic laws, as demonstrated by the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba, constitutes a unilateral act that is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the basic principles of the multilateral trading system.

Since 1992, when Peru voted in favour of resolution 47/19, submitted by Cuba for adoption by the General Assembly, the Peruvian Government has successively voted in favour of all resolutions on this matter.

Peru has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or regulations that could affect the sovereignty of other States or their freedom of trade and navigation.

Peru believes that these coercive measures affect the economic growth of Cuba and hinder its social and human development. The Government of Peru expresses its grave concern about the adverse effects of these measures on the quality of life and well-being of the Cuban people, especially with regard to food supply, health and other essential services, by denying them access to private credit, food, medicine, technology and other supplies needed for the country's development.

Peru continues to promote trade and economic exchanges with Cuba and has consistently opposed the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against that country.

Similarly, Peru considers that the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is inconsistent with the dynamics of regional politics, which have been strengthened by Cuba joining dialogue and cooperation forums in the Americas.

During the visit by the President of the Republic of Peru to Cuba, on 18 February 2016, agreement was reached on the steps to be taken to expand the economic complementarity agreement between the two countries. However, those steps have not yet been implemented for reasons of force majeure.

Philippines

[Original: English]
[23 May 2018]

The Philippines fully supports and reiterates its commitment to adhere to General Assembly resolution 72/4. The Philippines has not imposed, and does not intend to impose, any laws, regulations or measures that are contrary to resolution 72/4.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[30 May 2018]

The position of the State of Qatar remains unchanged with regard to the resolution, which it fully supports. Similarly, the State of Qatar firmly supports the rules and principles of international law in its foreign policy and fully complies with the purposes and principles of Charter of the United Nations.

Accordingly, the State of Qatar has not introduced or applied any laws or measures that are inconsistent with the resolution.

Republic of Korea

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Korea has consistently supported, since 1999, the General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. Therefore, the Republic of Korea has not applied laws nor administrative measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Republic of Moldova

[Original: English]
[20 April 2018]

The Republic of Moldova fully upholds the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and has never promulgated or applied laws and measures of the kind referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[31 May 2018]

The position of the Russian Federation with respect to General Assembly resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", remains unchanged. We strongly condemn the United States embargo against Cuba and call for its complete, immediate and unconditional repeal. In this regard we share the view of the overwhelming majority of members of the international community.

We consider the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States nearly 60 years ago to be an odious relic of the cold war, an egregious example of the violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the non-infringement of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, and an unconscionable practice whereby inter-State relations are conducted on the basis of unilateral sanctions that impede the ability of a sovereign State to implement its own development model.

The tightening of United States sanctions on Cuba under the current Administration of United State President Donald Trump is unjustified, counterproductive and, judging by the position of the international community, is leading to the self-imposed isolation of Washington. The United States embargo causes considerable damage to the Cuban economy and makes it more difficult for the Cuban authorities to carry out major changes. The burden is heavy, especially for the people of that island, since it limits the enjoyment of their legitimate rights to a dignified life and full social security, including health care. We believe that this type of unlawful practice is an anachronism that is in no way justified by current realities and runs counter to the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The experience of Cuba, which enjoys well-deserved respect in the world, its importance as a platform for dialogue and its role in resolving long-standing conflicts and promoting integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean are clear examples of the inadequacy, futility and short-sightedness of the high-handed policy employed by the United States with respect to Cuba.

Rwanda

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Rwanda, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, fully implements General Assembly resolution 72/4, reaffirms its support for said resolution and has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to the resolution. The Government of Rwanda stresses that there are no legal or regulatory impediments to free transit or trade between Rwanda and Cuba.

Saint Kitts and Nevis

[Original: English]
[23 May 2018]

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis continues to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, respecting its goal of maintaining world peace, developing relations among countries and fostering cooperation between nations in order to solve economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and international problems.

It is in this vein that the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis has refused to enact any policy or law which would adversely affect the socioeconomic development of any State Member of the United Nations. Saint Kitts and Nevis therefore wishes to reiterate its disappointment that, 58 years later, the United States still continues to impose the harsh and outdated trade embargo against the Government and people of the Republic of Cuba, which continues to hamper economic growth and development on the Caribbean island.

The continuance of this blockade by the United States will also inevitably affect Cuba's sustainable development trajectory and the United States Government should therefore be constantly condemned for continuing to undertake such oppressive measures against Cuba, while at the same time be encouraged to undertake more progressive measures in order to enhance the positive advances that were made a few years prior.

Cuba and Saint Kitts and Nevis have had strong diplomatic ties for over 20 years and Cuba remains one of our closest allies, given our shared values with regard to the provision of quality health care for our people and human capacity-building for our youth.

It is against this backdrop that the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis stands in solidarity with the Cuban people and joins the large group of countries that continue to vote in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and reiterates its position that the time has come for this long-standing, unjust embargo to end.

Saint Lucia

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

As a small island developing State, Saint Lucia is steadfast in its compliance with all relevant international legal obligations with respect to the principles of the sovereignty and equality of States. It is in this context that Saint Lucia has not promulgated any law, legislation or other measure or taken any action that would violate these principles which are critical to the survival and sustainability of the international system. Saint Lucia strictly adheres to the international legal doctrine of the exercise of sovereignty by a Member State in its lawful interests and its freedom to engage in commercial activity, trade or economic cooperation.

Despite the decades of economic, commercial and financial embargo, Cuba continues to provide critical economic, educational, scientific and technical support to many of its neighbouring countries in the Caribbean region in the spirit of South-South cooperation. Such cooperation has contributed significantly to the socioeconomic advancement and sustainability of Saint Lucia and other small island developing States in the Caribbean and in other regions.

Accordingly, Saint Lucia, once again, restates its long-standing position with respect to the extraterritorial application of national legislation which is inconsistent with the principles of international law, the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and peaceful coexistence among nations.

The Government of Saint Lucia continues to support the relevant General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

[Original: English]
[17 May 2018]

Each year since 1992, the General Assembly has passed a resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, condemning the ongoing impact of the embargo and declaring it to be in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The seventy-first session of the General Assembly marked a milestone when not a single Member State voted against the resolution to bring a definite end to this unilateral decision that has proven to be an untenable, unnecessary and undesirable fissure in our hemispheric family.

Opposition to this policy is now almost universal in nature. Citizens across the United States are joining the international community by increasingly voicing their disapproval and calling for the lifting of the unilateral sanctions. Today 73 per cent of Americans and 63 per cent of Cubans living in the United States support the lifting of the blockade. Yet, on 16 June 2017 the current President of the United States announced the strengthening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, as a key component of his policy towards Cuba. This was reaffirmed in his address to the United Nations during the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in September 2017. With this policy against Cuba, the new Administration will reverse the progress achieved over the period since the former President announced, on 17 December 2014, the beginning of a process to normalize bilateral ties, including the re-establishment of diplomatic relations.

In the meantime, we have begun the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which has set goals to guide the creation of the future we want and which aims to leave no one behind. We, the peoples of the international community, are "determined to take bold and transformative steps […] to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path". What place then does this embargo have in our modern world? And in an interconnected world of open borders and free movement of people, goods and capital, how can the champions and architects of globalization simultaneously legislate the isolation of one State, or place extraterritorial restrictions on commerce, global trade and the movement of individuals?

It is necessary to underscore yet again that this economic, commercial and financial embargo has been and continues to be a violation of international law. We must be reminded still that it is contrary to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines re-emphasizes its deeply held conviction that the ongoing embargo is a flagrant and systematic violation of the rights of an entire people. Moreover, the embargo against Cuba is not merely a bilateral matter between Cuba and the United States, but because of its extraterritorial nature, it violates the sovereign rights of many other States.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore maintains its steadfast support for the people of Cuba; we remain unequivocal in our call for the removal of this developmental constraint on our Caribbean neighbour and development partner.

Samoa

[Original: English]
[11 June 2018]

The Government of the Independent State of Samoa reaffirms its full commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles of international law, including the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation.

Samoa states that it has neither promulgated nor applied any laws or measures mentioned in General Assembly resolution 72/4 and therefore reaffirms its strong support for the resolution which calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

San Marino

[Original: English]
[9 April 2018]

The Republic of San Marino has always and generally been against any imposition of any embargo and therefore it is against the imposition of the unilateral embargo against Cuba as a means of pressure, because of the serious repercussions on the population.

Sao Tome and Principe

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe once again fully endorses the content of General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, of 1 November 2017.

Sao Tome and Principe pursues a policy of full respect for international law and is committed to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in the internal matters of other States.

The Government of Sao Tome and Principe continues to reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, and calls upon States to refrain from promulgating and applying such laws and measures as they affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of the entities under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation.

In this context, Sao Tome and Principe urges the expeditious removal of the current embargo facing the Republic of Cuba, which we believe would have a tremendous positive impact on the lives of the people of Cuba.

The Government of Sao Tome and Principe will continue to consistently support the annual resolution on this item and continuously vote in favour of this resolution in the General Assembly.

Saudi Arabia

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

Saudi Arabia enjoys normal diplomatic and trade relations with the Republic of Cuba.

Saudi Arabia has not applied laws or measures against Cuba that would prohibit economic, commercial or financial relations between Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Cuba.

In this context, Saudi Arabia is committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recalls and affirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Senegal

[Original: French]
[5 June 2018]

Senegal continues to be guided by the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

As in the past, it is in compliance with the provisions of resolution 72/4, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2017.

Serbia

[Original: English]
[17 May 2018]

The Republic of Serbia, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirming its commitment to the rules and principles of international law, fully implements General Assembly resolution 72/4 and has never promulgated or applied any laws or measures or acts of the kind referred to in the preamble to the resolution.

The Republic of Serbia has consistently supported the aforementioned resolution in the General Assembly and voted in its favour.

The Republic of Serbia calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, expressing the desire of the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

Seychelles

[Original: English]
[18 April 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Seychelles once again fully endorses the content of General Assembly resolution 72/4, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, adopted on 1 November 2017.

Seychelles pursues a policy of full respect for international law and is committed to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in the internal matters of other States.

The Government of Seychelles continues to reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impacts and all other forms of coercive economic measures and calls upon States to refrain from promulgating and applying such laws and measures as they affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of the entities under their jurisdiction, and the freedom of trade and navigation.

That being said, the Government of Seychelles welcomes and encourages attempts by the United States and Cuba to normalize the relations between the two countries. Seychelles has always been of the view that the strained relationship between the United States and Cuba has not been conducive to the sustainable development of the people of the United States nor of Cuba.

In this context, Seychelles, therefore, urges the expeditious removal of the current embargo facing the Republic of Cuba, which we believe will have a tremendous positive impact on the lives of the people of Cuba.

The Government of Seychelles will continue to consistently support the annual resolution on this item and vote in favour of this resolution in the General Assembly.

Sierra Leone

[Original: English]
[24 May 2018]

Sierra Leone reiterates its firm commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the cardinal principles of international law.

Accordingly, Sierra Leone strongly supports General Assembly resolution 72/4 and, in conformity with the obligations under the Charter, calls for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba.

The Government of Sierra Leone in that regard calls for the upholding of the principles of peaceful coexistence of nations, respect for the sovereignty of States and supports fair and open trade relations among States.

The position of the Government of Sierra Leone on this issue remains unchanged and it will continue to join other nations to call for the unconditional lifting of economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba.

Singapore

[Original: English]
[22 May 2018]

The Government of Singapore reaffirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4. Singapore has consistently supported resolutions calling for an end to the United States trade embargo on Cuba since 1995 and has voted in their favour.

Solomon Islands

[Original: English]
[19 April 2018]

Solomon Islands, in its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4, calls for the unconditional lifting of the 1962 economic and financial blockade on Cuba by the Government of the United States, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

Solomon Islands appreciates the spirit, resilience and generosity of the Government and people of Cuba in educating, sheltering and clothing children from a multitude of States who are studying there, despite the imposed hardship.

Somalia

[Original: English]
[25 May 2018]

Somalia has no laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4, in conformity with obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation.

South Africa

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Government of South Africa has taken note of the 16 June 2017 announcement of a new United States policy towards Cuba, which signalled a shift from the reconciliation and improved relations that had been initiated between Cuba and the previous United States Administration, and which reaffirms the United States statutory embargo against Cuba. This is a step backward in terms of finding a durable solution, needed to normalize bilateral relations between the two countries, which should be addressed without delay.

The disappointment of South Africa at the decision of the United States Administration to reverse the progress that was registered in the preceding two years towards ending the blockade was expressed in the statement by former President Jacob Zuma at the General Debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, in 2017.

The bilateral cooperation programmes of South Africa in the areas of health, human settlements, technical exchange, public works technical assistance, cooperation on water resource management and water supply, professional services in the field of basic education and cooperation in information and communications technology have a direct impact on thousands of people of both countries. The relations between South Africa and Cuba, therefore, serve as a successful and exemplary model of South-South cooperation. Despite this cooperation, no significant bilateral trade and investment has materialized. Undoubtedly, one of the biggest impediments to improved bilateral trade is the unilateral and illegal total blockade of Cuba by the United States and the extraterritorial application of sanctions on third countries.

We would like to request third-party countries to support Cuba and its people by scrapping any domestic laws or regulations that continue to hamper the development of Cuba and its people.

Cuba continues to be a beacon of hope for many developing countries and to play its part in making this world a better place for all humanity. However, for Cuba, the embargo remains the most significant obstacle in its quest to realize its development objectives, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The severe economic and financial restrictions that stifle the economic and social development of Cuba, which further exacerbate hardships and the suffering of the people of Cuba, are not acceptable.

South Africa and the overwhelming majority of the international community have, for 26 consecutive years, supported the annual resolutions of the General Assembly calling for the immediate lifting of the economic blockade unilaterally imposed by the United States against Cuba.

South Africa takes this opportunity to appeal once again to the international community to redouble its efforts to promote constructive and transparent dialogue between the two countries, with a view to achieving the objectives of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the matter and to ensure the sustainable further progress of the people of Cuba.

South Sudan

[Original: English]
[22 June 2018]

The Republic of South Sudan reiterates its profound concern about the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. In line with the majority of States Member of the United Nations and African Union resolutions Assembly/AU/Res.1(XVII), Assembly/AU/Res.1(XIX) and Assembly/AU/Res.1(XXI), the Republic of South Sudan calls for the lifting of the embargo endured by the Cuban people for over half a century. The Republic of South Sudan considers that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba is a unilateral act contrary to the principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of the multilateral trading system. The Republic of South Sudan considers that these coercive measures are affecting Cuba's economic growth and impeding its social and human development. In this regard, the Republic of South Sudan urges the implementation of resolution 72/4 to end the blockade on Cuba.

Sri Lanka

[Original: English]
[3 May 2018]

Sri Lanka does not approve of the use of unilateral economic measures, against any country, that are inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Sri Lanka is of the view that the implementation of such measures impedes the rule of law, the transparency of international trade and the freedom of trade and navigation.

Sri Lanka has not promulgated any laws and measures referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Sri Lanka has continuously supported the adoption of the resolutions on this item at the General Assembly and has taken the position that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba needs to end.

Sudan

[Original: Arabic]
[31 May 2018]

General Assembly resolution 72/4 is a very important resolution, and the Sudan fully supported it and voted in favour of it in the General Assembly. The resolution calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Sudan and Cuba were established in 1969. The year 2016 marked the forty-seventh anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations between the two countries. Bilateral relations between the two countries took a further step forward when the Ambassador of the Republic of the Sudan to Venezuela was accredited as Ambassador to Cuba in March 2014. That bilateral relationship has been further strengthened through the exchange of visits by senior-level officials from both countries.

The Government of the Republic of the Sudan pursues a policy of full respect for international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the sovereign equality of States, and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. Consistent with its principled stand, the Sudan opposes the imposition of sanctions on developing countries because of their devastating impact on the efforts of those countries to achieve sustainable development and because they constitute a violation of the Charter. To that effect, the Sudan participates every year in the debate of the General Assembly on the agenda item and votes with the majority of Member States, in favour of Assembly resolutions prohibiting the imposition of such unilateral measures and sanctions. The Government of the Republic of the Sudan reaffirms that it does not promulgate or apply any laws or measures that could, by being applied outside its own national borders, affect the sovereignty of any State. The Government of the Republic of the Sudan calls for the repeal of laws that impose such measures.

On the basis of the foregoing, the Sudan opposes the economic and commercial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which has caused great damage and suffering to the Cuban people and violated its legitimate rights and interests, being a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter and showing disregard for their lofty and noble principles.

The Sudan itself continues to await the full implementation of the decision made by the United States in October 2017 to lift unilateral economic, commercial and financial sanctions, particularly with regard to facilitating banking transactions, foreign direct investment flows and commercial exchange.

Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/4, the Government of the Republic of the Sudan has put the issue at hand before the concerned multilateral organs with a view to mobilizing support for the elimination of all forms of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries. The Republic of the Sudan also commends the initiative of the modernization of the social and economic model, presented by Cuba.

Suriname

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Republic of Suriname remains firmly committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to upholding the principles of international law. Suriname is of the considered view that sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the right of nations to develop according to their own chartered paths should be respected at all times.

Suriname, therefore, views the commercial, economic and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States of America as contrary to those principles and norms and counterproductive in trade relations.

Suriname expresses, once again, its solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba and places on record that the Government of the Republic of Suriname has never promulgated or applied laws and measures affecting the economic, commercial and financial rights of the people and Government of Cuba, as referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Suriname, therefore, calls for the lifting of the United States of America's embargo against Cuba, and encourages the United States to return to the process of normalization of relations with Cuba, on the basis of mutual respect.

Sweden

[Original: English]
[24 May 2018]

The Government of Sweden reconfirms its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4. Sweden neither promulgates nor applies any laws and measures of the kind referred to in the resolution. Sweden does not apply trade or economic legislation that restricts or discourages trade with or investment in or from Cuba. Sweden opposes the extraterritorial extension of unilateral measures against a third country. Sweden encourages the United States and Cuba to continue improving their bilateral relationship and hopes this will lead to the lifting of the embargo in the near future.

Switzerland

[Original: French]
[1 June 2018]

As in previous years, Switzerland expressed its support for General Assembly resolution 72/4 in 2017. Switzerland considers that the economic, financial and commercial measures taken against the Republic of Cuba have negative repercussions on the living conditions of the Cuban people and increase their economic difficulties. For these reasons, they should be repealed. Switzerland will continue to make its good offices available, if so desired.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]
[10 May 2018]

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its full commitment to United Nations resolutions calling for an immediate end to the unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, the most recent of which is General Assembly resolution 72/4 of 1 November 2017. That unjust embargo constitutes a flagrant violation of the various resolutions in which the General Assembly rejected unilateral coercive economic measures, which it has characterized as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

The Syrian Arab Republic rejects, as a matter of principle, the imposition by States or regional or subregional groups of any unilateral measures, whether economic, commercial or financial, to coerce developing countries politically and economically and force those countries to adhere to their policies and serve their interests.

The embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba since 1962 is based on the immoral political conviction that Governments with economic influence and military power may exert domination over the peoples of the world and developing countries through the use of unilateral coercive economic measures. Such unjust policies are contrary to human rights principles and international humanitarian law, and to the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the pledge to leave no one behind and the principle that development and well-being are among the fundamental rights of all peoples of the world, without discrimination or restriction.

The Syrian Arab Republic notes that the General Assembly, in its resolution 72/201, urged the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries that were not authorized by relevant organs of the United Nations or were inconsistent with the principles of international law as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and that contravened the basic principles of the multilateral trading system. In the same resolution, the Assembly called upon the international community to condemn and reject the imposition of the use of such measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, and requested the Secretary-General to monitor the imposition of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion and to study the impact of such measures on the affected countries, including the impact on trade and development.

In that regard, the Syrian Arab Republic notes that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/185 (A/72/307) is completely devoid of any recommendations, serious solutions or genuine mechanisms to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolutions that reject unilateral coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

The legal and ethical problem, to which the United Nations today has the primary responsibility to provide serious and effective solutions, is that there are no international legal mechanisms to challenge unilateral coercive economic measures. As a result, certain Governments continue to impose such illegal measures, because annual resolutions of the General Assembly and the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, while important, will not alone put an end to the injustice imposed on peoples, States, individuals and institutions that fall victim to such illegal unilateral economic measures.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls for the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States to be eliminated in all its forms, and for the Government of the United States to take political, legal and financial responsibility for the cumulative negative impacts of that unjust embargo on Cuba and its people since 1962.

The Syrian Arab Republic continues to be the target of a number coercive economic measures that have been unilaterally imposed by the United States, the European Union, the League of Arab States and a number of other States, including Britain, Canada and Australia. These hostile coercive measures have had a calamitous effect on the Syrian people and caused them as much suffering as the acts of terrorism that have been committed by the terrorist organizations Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Nusrah Front, and associated groups, individuals and entities that are supported and funded by some of the States that are imposing coercive measures against the Syrian people. These illegal coercive measures prevent the Syrian people from meeting their basic needs and accessing essential services such as nutrition, medications, education, medical supplies, fuel, and agricultural and industrial items, as well as spare parts for civil aviation and telecommunications equipment. These measures also prevent the Syrian Government and private sector from cooperating or working with a third party, and they prevent any private establishment or foreign entity from entering into a contract with the Syrian Government out of fear that it might be slapped with financial and banking penalties and blacklisted by the States that have imposed the unilateral measures. These unjust measures impede the importation of the most basic needs of Syrians and prevent Syria from concluding maintenance and repair contracts. In the future, they will impede our ability to execute reconstruction and infrastructure rehabilitation projects and to achieve the sustainable development g[illegible] objectives related to economic and social development.

The time has come to put an end to such immoral and contradictory practices against Cuba, the Syrian Arab Republic and other States. In a multipolar world, it is no longer appropriate for the Governments of the United States of America, the States of the European Union and certain other States to have recourse to a policy of using their economic and financial might to subjugate peoples and exploit their economic, humanitarian and social conditions, and to interfere in the internal affairs of other States with a view to dominating or destroying them.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls for the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba to be eliminated in all its forms and for the unilateral measures imposed by the United States, the European Union and other States on a number of countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic, to be brought to an end.

Tajikistan

[Original: English]
[25 May 2018]

The Government of Tajikistan reaffirms its position in support of General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Tajikistan is committed to the principles of international law and supports the fundamental rights of nations to freely choose their own ways of development. Taking into account, among other principles, the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade, Tajikistan believes that such economic, commercial and financial measures against Cuba continue to adversely affect the living conditions and human rights of the Cuban people and hamper the efforts of the Government of Cuba to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, given that the international community is facing major challenges, such as the global financial and economic crisis and the resulting increase in poverty, unemployment and malnutrition, the imposition of embargoes and sanctions is more unjustifiable than ever and deserves appropriate reactions at the global level.

Such actions are contrary to the principles of international law, the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and peaceful coexistence among States.

Tajikistan enjoys friendly diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba. Tajikistan will continue to take further measures to strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

Thailand

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

Since 1994, the Royal Thai Government has consistently supported General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the trade and economic embargo against Cuba.

Thailand opposes the imposition by one country of its national law on another country which, in effect, compels a third party to comply with it. Such an act would be contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The imposition of the unilateral embargo against Cuba has undermined the socioeconomic development of the country and caused suffering for its people.

Thailand has maintained neither legal provisions nor domestic measures of such nature and continues to discourage them.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Republic of Macedonia has neither applied nor promulgated any unilateral sanctions or embargo and reiterates that it fully implements General Assembly resolution 72/4.

Timor-Leste

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste adheres fully to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

In this regard, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste reaffirms its position in support of General Assembly resolution 72/4 and reiterates that it has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures referred to therein.

The Government of Timor-Leste is opposed to the continued adoption and application of such extraterritorial measures and supports the immediate and unconditional lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Togo

[Original: French]
[31 May 2018]

In keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, Togo has always striven to promote respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and for non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs. Likewise, it supports unreservedly the principle of freedom of trade and navigation, which is enshrined in numerous international legal instruments.

Consequently, Togo systematically rejects the use of any unilateral measures to exert pressure on States.

For this reason, it has never promulgated or applied any laws or regulations that curtail the sovereignty of other States or the legitimate interests of entities or individuals under their jurisdiction.

The Government of Togo has always supported the initiatives taken by the Cuban Government to end the embargo imposed against Cuba by the United States of America. The embargo must end, as that would contribute to further advances towards the restoration of economic and trade relations between the two countries, a goal that the Togolese Republic wholeheartedly supports. Togo urgently hopes that the rapprochement that began with the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two States in 2015 will continue.

Tonga

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

The Kingdom of Tonga adheres fully to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and accepted under international law, in particular, the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

Thus, the Kingdom of Tonga has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4. The Kingdom of Tonga maintains friendly and diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Trinidad and Tobago

[Original: English]
[4 June 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago remains fully committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, in particular, to the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Government remains steadfast in its view that discriminatory trade practices and the extraterritorial application of domestic laws are inconsistent with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Accordingly, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter and international law, Trinidad and Tobago does not apply unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against other States.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has maintained a multifaceted relationship with the Republic of Cuba, an important dimension of which is economic in nature, since 1972, when diplomatic relations were established. Trinidad and Tobago consistently supports subregional, regional and international efforts to promote constructive dialogue to bring about the cessation, sooner rather than later, of the economic, commercial and financial embargo in place against Cuba, which significantly challenges the achievement of sustainable development in that country.

Trinidad and Tobago had therefore welcomed, with enthusiasm, the reopening of direct and frank dialogue between Cuba and an influential and respected member of the international community. We were encouraged, in particular, by the summit held between the two countries and the ensuing open dialogue on several issues, including those on which they maintain divergent views and policies. However, that optimism was short-lived as additional restrictions on travel to and trading with Cuba were imposed. Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its support for rolling back such a process and calls upon the well-respected and responsible member of the international community to work with Cuba to build a mature and open bilateral relationship, based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its position that the full achievement of such a relationship will continue to be elusive without the lifting of the embargo. This crucial goal must be a priority for both Governments and peoples.

Trinidad and Tobago therefore renews, with fervour, its long-standing call for the full reintegration of Cuba into the international system and the ending of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Tunisia

[Original: French]
[3 May 2018]

Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In that context, Tunisia supported General Assembly resolution 72/4 and all of the previous General Assembly resolutions calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba.

Tunisia does not apply unilateral laws or measures with extraterritorial effects. It therefore has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures against Cuba prohibiting economic, commercial or financial relations between the two countries.

Turkey

[Original: English]
[10 May 2018]

The Republic of Turkey does not have any laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4. Turkey expresses concern about such measures, which adversely affect the living standards of people, and reaffirms its adherence to the principles of freedom of trade and navigation in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The Government of Turkey maintains its stance that differences and problems between States should be settled through dialogue and negotiations.

Turkmenistan

[Original: English]
[31 May 2018]

The Government of Turkmenistan once again reaffirms its position in support of General Assembly resolution 72/4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Turkmenistan reaffirms the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation, which are also enshrined in many international legal instruments.

Turkmenistan considers that the use of economic measures as a means of exerting political and economic pressure contravenes the basic principles of international law and also the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and other fundamental international legal instruments.

The unilateral embargo against the Republic of Cuba prevents the development of the Cuban economy and creates a big obstacle to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The relevant United Nations agencies should take appropriate steps to prevent economic sanctions and unilateral coercive measures by individual States against other independent States, including Cuba.

Tuvalu

[Original: English]
[24 May 2018]

The Government of Tuvalu supports and promotes the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for solidarity, cooperation and friendly relations and fair trade practices among all nations. The current embargo against Cuba limits the efforts of that Government and its people to pursue and achieve their developmental and social goals and aspirations and human rights. Despite the embargo, Cuba has continued to assist Tuvalu and many other developing countries by training medical personnel in its renowned universities. Cuba can really do much more to enhance its global outreach despite the embargo.

The Government of Tuvalu fully supports the lifting of the economic, commercial, immigration and financial embargo against Cuba in line with the unequivocal and continued request of the clear majority of States Members of the United Nations. The positive advances in mending the relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba are an honourable step in the right direction, very much appreciated by Tuvalu.

Uganda

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

Uganda has cordial bilateral relations and close collaborations with the people and Government of Cuba, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

It should concern everyone that after decades the embargo against Cuba has had no remarkable achievement, except to have caused great economic hardships to the Cuban people, yet it has remained in force.

United Arab Emirates

[Original: English]
[11 May 2018]

The United Arab Emirates voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 72/4, which was adopted by 191 votes.

The United Arab Emirates acts in accordance with its obligations under the principles and goals of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and emphasizes that all States should enjoy full freedom of trade and navigation in all international sea lanes in accordance with international law, and therefore, the United Arab Emirates does not apply any economic, commercial or financial embargo on Cuba. Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates does not permit the application of such measures outside the context of international legitimacy.

United Republic of Tanzania

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The United Republic of Tanzania expresses its concern about the continued unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo placed on Cuba, which hinders the development of the country and its people. The Cuban people equally deserve to enjoy their basic rights to adequate living standards, as stipulated in international humanitarian law and human rights.

To ensure the inclusiveness of all States in the implementation and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the socioeconomic and political interaction of Cuba with others should be free from obstacles. The blockade must be removed in respect of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of the people of Cuba, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Uruguay

[Original: Spanish]
[14 May 2018]

In connection with General Assembly resolution 72/4, and in particular paragraph 4 thereof, Uruguay has always strictly respected and observed the principles of international law and all the norms set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

Taking into account also that the London Naval Conference of 1909 stipulates that embargoes are an act of war, we believe that, decades after the end of the cold war and in the current context, there is no justification for the continuation of measures such as the economic and trade blockade or embargo.

Accordingly, Uruguay has not promulgated or applied any provisions affecting the sovereign equality or decisions of other States, and respects the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of another State.

In addition, Uruguay has strongly condemned any theory that supports or justifies the extraterritorial application of domestic laws, except those that form part of international law, primarily in relation to protective jurisdiction and universal jurisdiction.

Uruguay rejects any direct or indirect means constituting unilateral action by one State to impose sanctions for sovereign decisions taken by another State in the political, economic, commercial, social, cultural or other arena.

In view of the above, Uruguay believes that the sanctions imposed and the extraterritorial laws enacted against Cuba not only are a violation of international law, but also have caused harm to Cuban economic development, constitute a form of deprivation of the right to development and have inflicted incalculable damage on the dignity and sovereignty of the Cuban people.

The process of rapprochement between Cuba and the United States and the mutual de-escalation measures designed to improve the bilateral climate announced in December 2014 that led to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations were historic steps and marked unprecedented progress in favour of peace and dialogue in the Americas as a whole. Nevertheless, our country regrets the current cooling of relations between Cuba and the United States and rejects the ongoing blockade, encouraging the Government of the United States to minimize its implementation until it is completely eliminated.

Uzbekistan

[Original: Russian]
[29 June 2018]

The Republic of Uzbekistan supports General Assembly resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

Uzbekistan fully complies with the provisions of this resolution and has never promulgated or applied laws or measures of the kind referred to in its preamble.

Vanuatu

[Original: English]
[14 June 2018]

The Government and people of the Republic of Vanuatu remain firmly committed to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and to respecting and upholding the principles of international law, especially with regard to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security; promoting the economic and social advancement of all peoples; reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; promoting the freedom of international trade and navigation; and promoting the practice of tolerance and living together in peace with one another as good neighbours.

Vanuatu continues to remain concerned that, despite numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly requesting the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba, the embargo remains in place.

To date, Vanuatu does not apply unilateral laws or measures with extraterritorial effects. It therefore has not promulgated or applied any laws or measures against Cuba prohibiting economic, commercial or financial relations between the two countries.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns and rejects the application of unilateral measures with extraterritorial effects that violate the sovereign rights and political independence of other States or human rights. Venezuela defends this position in adherence to the tenets and values expressed in the Constitution; these include humanism, cooperation, solidarity among peoples and staunch pacifism guided by unconditional respect for the norms and principles of international law.

In that connection, the Venezuelan Government considers that the application of such measures by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba is an anachronism contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and other international legal instruments and, in addition, violates the freedom of trade and navigation and the norms of the international trading system. Furthermore, Venezuela reaffirms its condemnation of the application of the extraterritorial provisions of the Torricelli Act (Cuban Democracy Act) and the Helms-Burton Act (Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act), which have caused serious additional harm to the economy of the

Republic of Cuba for two decades, both in terms of its economic relations with third countries and with the subsidiaries of United States companies.

Venezuela has consistently supported the resolutions on this subject that have been adopted by an overwhelming and exceptional majority of the General Assembly since 1991. Similarly, Venezuela has made and supported declarations in other international forums repudiating such actions, which are by definition hostile and therefore undermine peaceful coexistence between nations and international legality.

Venezuela reiterates that it highly appreciates the great importance of the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba since December 2014, one particular highlight of which was the visit of the then President Barack Obama to Havana in March 2016.

However, the Bolivarian Government regrets the backsliding shown by the Government of President Donald Trump on a number of occasions when it has expressed its intention to reaffirm interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Cuba as elements of its policies towards the brotherly Caribbean country. Venezuela believes that it is harmful to develop and implement State policies based on one-sided accusations wholly lacking in merit.

That policy of confrontation that has been promoted and implemented by the United States of America for decades has affected the well-being of the Latin American and Caribbean sister nation, whose human rights have been violated as a result of the implementation of these illegal measures. In this regard, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela urges the United States to comply immediately with General Assembly resolutions 47/19, 48/16, 49/9, 50/10, 51/17, 52/10, 53/4, 54/21, 55/20, 56/9, 57/11, 58/7, 59/11, 60/12, 61/11, 62/3, 63/7, 64/6, 65/6, 66/6, 67/4, 68/8, 69/5, 70/5, 71/5 and 72/4, whose adoptions have been marked by historical majority votes within the United Nations.

Indeed, while reiterating its condemnation of the continuation of this anachronistic and internationally illegal measure, the Government of Venezuela stresses that such actions in no way foster the climate of dialogue and cooperation that must prevail in international relations among sovereign, independent countries in conformity with the spirit and purpose of the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) on the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States, adopted on 24 October 1970.

One example of the harmful effects of the continued and unchanged application of the embargo worthy of mention is referred to in the 2017 report of the World Food Programme, in which it notes that “throughout 2016 the embargo continued to have a negative impact on the Cuban economy, as well as on the operational conditions of the World Food Programme. The high cost of importing agricultural equipment or inputs is a limiting factor for agricultural productivity in Cuba, and has an impact on the country’s ability to produce all its food requirements. As a result, the Government needs to import a significant proportion of food commodities to meet the requirement of its national food-based social safety net programmes. This represents a significant budgetary burden for the country, threatens those most dependent on social safety nets and imposes challenges to food security in Cuba”.

Furthermore, according to the 2017 report of the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization, “for the period April 2016-March 2017, the economic impact on the health sector is estimated to have exceeded $80 million, with a cumulative impact of over 2.6 billion United States dollars from the beginning of the embargo to date.”

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela endorses the repeated declarations made by, inter alia, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the twenty-fifth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Seventh Summit of the Association of Caribbean States, in repudiation of the application of unilateral measures with extraterritorial effects, which it considers to be contrary to dialogue and cooperation as genuine expressions of inclusive and transparent multilateralism.

Venezuela also wishes to draw attention to the validity of the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, in which those leaders stated the following:

> "We reaffirm our call to the United States Government to unconditionally put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade it has imposed on that sister nation for more than five decades and is still in force. We urge the President of the United States to use his broad executive powers to substantially change the application of the blockade."

By denouncing the criminal measures against Cuba by the United States, Venezuela has continued to comply with General Assembly resolution 72/4. In the light of its moral and material commitment to strictly adhere to international law, Venezuela once more calls on the United States to lift, unconditionally, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba, which owing to its extraterritorial nature affects all States with economic, financial and trade relations with that country. A change on the part of the Government of the United States would demonstrate that country's commitment to international law, and its respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The international community must continue to demand an end to the practice of applying unilateral coercive measures that seek to curtail the sovereign right of States to determine, in keeping with the right of self-determination, their political and social model, in line with the situations and particularities of their respective countries and peoples. Peoples should under no circumstances be deprived of their own means of subsistence and development.

Lastly, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela renews its firm commitment to unconditional respect for the norms and principles of international law and therefore appeals again to the Government of the United States to comply with the 26 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to end the merciless and criminal economic, commercial and financial embargo which it has illegally maintained against Cuba for more than 55 years.

Viet Nam

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

The United States policy of blockade and embargo against the Republic of Cuba over the past many decades represents a violation of international law in general and free communication and trade law in particular and an infringement of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, contravening the common desire of nations in the world to build sound and equal international relations, regardless of political system, and with respect for each nation's right to choose its own path of development.

The General Assembly has for many consecutive years adopted, with an overwhelming majority, resolutions demanding that the United States end its economic, trade and financial blockade and embargo policies and laws against Cuba, the most recent of which is resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017 by 191 votes in favour.

Viet Nam reaffirms its strong support for the related General Assembly resolutions and believes that the United Nations will soon produce concrete initiatives and measures to rapidly implement the adopted resolutions in order to put an immediate end to the blockade and embargo against Cuba.

It is the view of Viet Nam that the United States should maintain dialogue and negotiation with the Republic of Cuba to strengthen the relationship between the two countries, based on the spirit of mutual understanding, respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, and non-interference in the other's internal affairs. It is our wish that the United States would put an early and complete end to the blockade and embargo against Cuba. This will bring mutual benefits to the people of both Cuba and the United States and significantly contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability, as well as the enhancement of cooperation in the Americas and the world.

Once again, Viet Nam confirms its friendship, cooperation and solidarity with the Cuban people and resolves to do its utmost with other peace-, freedom- and justice-loving peoples in the world to help the Cuban people overcome the consequences of the above-mentioned immoral and illegal blockade and embargo policy.

Yemen

[Original: English]
[10 April 2018]

The Government of the Republic of Yemen reasserts its strong belief in the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law relating to national sovereignty, non-aggression, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and the settling of disputes between States by peaceful means.

The Government of Yemen supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to create effective means of implementing General Assembly resolution 72/4, aimed at the adoption by the international community of effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral economic measures as a means of economic and political coercion against developing countries.

It should be noted that for some four decades, the Republic of Yemen has enjoyed outstanding diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba in the economic, social and cultural spheres. Yemen has consistently sought to develop and strengthen those relations in the joint interest of both countries and peoples. Yemen has concluded several bilateral cooperation agreements with the fraternal Republic of Cuba regarding diplomatic, economic, cultural and medical matters. As a result, there has been active cooperation in a number of areas.

Zambia

[Original: English]
[6 June 2018]

Zambia reaffirms its commitment to supporting the resolution on lifting the United States embargo against Cuba, and notes with concern the diminishing prospects for the resolution of the decades-old embargo. The resulting situation continues to hinder the development of trade, tourism and shipping in line with the developmental aspirations of the Cuban people. It is for this reason that Zambia underscores the position persistently held by the States Members of the United Nations that the embargo hurts innocent people, particularly women and children.

Zambia is concerned that the embargo against Cuba has already cost the local economy in excess of $130 billion over the nearly six decades of its existence. No economy should be subject to such pressure while trying its utmost to improve the well-being of its people in line with the global development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a concern, therefore, that the bold economic reforms on which Cuba has embarked have yielded some progress, but not to the desired effect, as the sanctions continue to choke the prospects for economic growth.

Zambia is equally concerned that the positive steps towards the restoration of relations that began in December 2014 have taken a regressive turn, and the embargo, which has been in place since 1962, continues to epitomize the relations between the two nations. In reality, the world has moved on and sanctions remain as a relic of a bygone era. To this end, the United States Congress is also called upon to play its role in ushering in the era of normalcy for Cuba-United States relations. Zambia stands in solidarity with all peace-loving nations in calling for the end to the embargo against Cuba.

Zimbabwe

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba by the United States of America continues to be a heavy burden on the people of Cuba as it has inflicted grave human suffering. The blockade also remains the single biggest obstacle to the functioning and potential of the Cuban economy.

The blockade is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. The economic blockade against Cuba is also contrary to accepted international trade regulations and practices.

Zimbabwe joins other Member States in calling upon other Member States to refrain from the promulgation and application of national laws with extraterritorial impact and all other coercive economic measures. Zimbabwe continues to believe that unilateral sanctions which tend to be targeted mainly at developing countries seeking to reassert their sovereignty and chart their own development course are detrimental to global efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Zimbabwe therefore calls for the unconditional lifting of the blockade. The almost unanimous support for General Assembly resolution 72/4 demonstrates the universal view that the blockade is unjust and contrary to international norms for harmonious relations between States.

Holy See

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

The Holy See has never drawn up or applied economic, commercial or financial laws or measures against Cuba. The Holy See, on the contrary, has maintained a consistent policy in favour of an end to the embargo against Cuba.

During their visits to Cuba, Pope John Paul II (1998), Pope Benedict XVI (2012) and Pope Francis (2015) appealed to Cuba to open itself to the world and to the world to open itself to Cuba. Building bridges through a culture of encounter and dialogue befits the friendship and international solidarity that should exist between all nations.

The Holy See thus hopes to see as soon as possible an end to the embargo that, for decades, has had humanitarian consequences, especially for those most excluded in Cuba and has caused the economic isolation of Cuba. The Holy See believes that the end of the embargo will contribute to more harmonious and fraternal relations between the people of Cuba and those of the United States of America.

The Holy See therefore urges both Cuba and the United States to persevere in the pursuit of normalizing their relations, and encourages their respective political leaders to assume their responsibility in leading this process.

State of Palestine

[Original: English]
[1 May 2018]

The State of Palestine, which continues to suffer from the devastating humanitarian, socioeconomic, developmental, as well as political and security, impacts of more than a half-century of belligerent Israeli military occupation, including an inhumane blockade that has been imposed on the Gaza Strip for more than a decade, in grave breach of international law and with grave consequences, reiterates its full support for the calls by the Republic of Cuba for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

In this regard, Palestine joins the overwhelming majority of States of the international community in reaffirming its principled position in support of General Assembly resolution 72/4, adopted on 1 November 2017, and all other relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as its adherence to the relevant positions articulated by the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, among others, calling for an end to the trade embargo that has been unjustly imposed for decades against the Republic of Cuba.

It had been the hope of Palestine that developments in recent years in the context of bilateral relations between the Republic of Cuba and United States of America would progress and foster genuine normalization, which would clearly require that this long-standing and unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo be effectively ended. We thus join the international community in calling for a swift lifting of this embargo to allow for unimpeded Cuban trade and normal economic activity, which are imperative for the sustainable development that Cuba and all nations seek, as well as for the prosperity and stability of their peoples and countries.

In this regard, the State of Palestine, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, affirms that it has never promulgated or applied laws or measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 72/4. Moreover, the State of Palestine enjoys full diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba and will continue to stand in solidarity with the Cuban people and Government and to strive to strengthen its long-standing political, economic and cultural relations and cooperation with the Republic of Cuba.

III. Replies received from organs and agencies of the United Nations system

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

Cuba has not signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and is therefore not a member of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. In addition, Cuba does not host international monitoring system facilities under the Treaty. On 18 June 2015, Cuba was granted observer status by the Preparatory Commission, enabling it to attend meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, without the right to participate in the decision-making process. As a non-signatory State, however, Cuba is not currently a recipient of equipment and technical support related to the establishment of a national data centre that would provide it with access to the data collected by the international monitoring system, and it does not at present routinely take part in associated capacity-building or training programmes of the Organization. Therefore, in the context of General Assembly resolution 72/4, the situation has not arisen whereby the existing embargo could affect the implementation of the organization's projects.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

I. General trends

According to official data, the Cuban economy grew 1.6 per cent in 2017 (compared to 0.5 per cent in 2016), driven by the continued uptrend in tourist arrivals, as well as positive results in agricultural production, transport and construction. During 2017, the Cuban economy was heavily affected by drought and by Hurricane Irma, which caused damage estimated at 13 billion Cuban pesos, equivalent to approximately 13 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The economy was also affected by the renewed intensity of the United States-imposed economic, trade and financial embargo, as well as the ongoing crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which remains a key trading partner for Cuba.

Available data indicates a minor recovery in the external sector, driven by a significant reduction in imports, which are heavily dependent on the availability of foreign currency, and an improved export performance, which benefited from an uptrend in service exports and higher prices for some key export goods. The fiscal deficit widened to 10 per cent of GDP (from 6.7 per cent in 2017) driven by larger expenditures associated with the promotion of import substitution, mainly of basic food products, post-hurricane reconstruction and infrastructure investment. Largely as a result of the embargo, Cuba has limited access to international financial markets. Consequently, in order to finance the public deficit, the Government issued bonds in the domestic banking market, which is composed entirely of State-owned banks.

In April 2018, the National Assembly confirmed former First Vice-President, Miguel Díaz-Canel, as President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers, succeeding Raúl Castro. General Castro is to remain Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba until 2021. Over the medium term, it is expected that public policies will continue to be guided by the economic and social policy guidelines approved by the National Assembly in June 2017. The guidelines contemplate an economy led by public enterprises and cooperatives, which are progressively being granted more operational autonomy, while formally recognizing a role for non-State economic actors, mainly agricultural cooperatives and self-employed workers. The approved guidelines also prioritize attracting foreign investment and putting the monetary system in order, in which two currencies and multiple exchange rates currently coexist.

For 2018, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) expects growth to remain subdued, at around between 1.6 per cent to 2 per cent. The outlook reflects the negative impact of the new United States policy measures on tourism, which had benefited recently from an upsurge in visitors from that country, as well as rising oil prices and foreign-exchange shortages. These effects will be partly attenuated by still healthy visitor arrivals from the rest of the world, a positive outlook for the prices of key export goods, private construction and an expansionary fiscal policy driven by production and infrastructure investments and hurricane-related reconstruction efforts. Foreign direct investment is expected to be around $600 million.

II. Economic policy

The fiscal stance was markedly expansionary in 2017, with a State deficit equivalent to approximately 10 per cent of GDP (up from 6.7 per cent in 2016). The deterioration in public finances reflects an increase in expenditures that was only partially offset by growth in revenues.

Growth in fiscal revenues in nominal terms accelerated from 2.5 per cent in 2016 to 6.7 per cent in 2017, mainly as a result of the performance of taxes on services and personal income, which made up for the deceleration in revenue from the sales tax and the fall in proceeds from the labour-force tax. This partially reflects the buoyancy of the service sector, especially tourism-related activities, as well as the growing importance of the non-State sector in economic activity.

Total expenditures grew 11.5 per cent, chiefly as a result of the increase in resources devoted to non-budgeted activities, as well as in capital expenditures. During 2017, outlays on budgeted activities (mainly public administration, education, health and social security) fell by 0.4 per cent in nominal terms. The main item among non-budgeted expenditures, which accounted for a third of total spending, was subsidies to finance exports, mainly of sugar, and substitute imports, predominantly beans, rice, meat and milk. The largest component of capital expenditures was hydraulic and transport infrastructure investment.

In order to meet the challenges posed by Hurricane Irma, which affected 12 provinces during the first half of September, several budget lines were redirected to finance subsidies for construction materials, consumer goods and bank loan rates for the affected population. The deficit was financed by issuing bonds in the domestic banking sector, carrying 2.5 per cent annual interest with a 20-year maturity. Although current data on public debt are unavailable, existing information indicates that debt service during the year was equivalent to approximately 1 per cent of GDP.

Going forward, the 2018 budget includes an 18.8 per cent nominal increase in the State deficit since, notwithstanding planned administrative improvements, which should result in higher tax collection from the non-State sector, the increase in expenditures is expected to outstrip revenue growth.

The Central Bank of Cuba reported no changes to the instruments available for the conduct of monetary policy in 2017: bands for nominal lending rates and legal reserve requirements. The increase of 8 per cent in the M2 monetary aggregate was propelled largely by an expansion of cash in circulation, reflecting the still low level of bank use. Credit is estimated to have grown at a similar pace. The main recipients of bank credit are State-owned enterprises in the agriculture and construction sectors.

No details are available yet regarding the proposed process of currency and exchange rate unification. The issue is important, since the multiplicity of exchange rates creates significant economic distortions in both the domestic and external sectors and implies a complex network of subsidies across public enterprises. The Cuban authorities have established nine key economic priorities for 2018, including investment, foreign-exchange earnings, hurricane-related reconstruction and restocking of medical supplies.

III. Evolution of key variables

Despite financial and climate effects, the external sector yielded an overall positive performance in 2017, thanks to better international prices for nickel and oil products, as well as robust growth in visitor arrivals to Cuba. According to preliminary estimates, notwithstanding the impact of Hurricane Irma on tourism in late 2017, the yearly visitor numbers increased 11.9 per cent to a record 4.7 million.

The improvement of the external balance also reflected a compression of imports. The relatively satisfactory level of production of agricultural products trimmed the need for imports to supply domestic demand. However, imports were also affected by accumulated arrears with suppliers, non-payment of letters of credit, which exacerbate the already limited access to trade finance, and ongoing challenges in the supply of fuel.

Cuba does not publish data on family remittances; however, independent estimates point to continued growth in these flows. Concerning foreign direct investment, regardless of the multiple disincentives stemming from the operational challenges posed by the blockade imposed by the United States, the distortions originated by monetary duality and administrative inefficiencies, in 2017 a cumulative $2 billion was announced in investment commitments. The most recent version of the portfolio of foreign investment opportunities shows that investment priorities are related to projects in renewable energies, light industries and tourism.

In the short term, the external sector will continue to benefit from service exports. However, there is a clear downside risk that the projected fall in visitors from the United States, as a result of the recently adopted policies discouraging travel to Cuba, will not be fully counterbalanced by arrivals from the rest of the world. Imports will continue to be conditioned by the availability of foreign currency. In this respect, a new requirement has been introduced for state enterprises to obtain authorization from the Central Bank for imports of over $100,000.

Based on revised 2016 figures, according to which the Cuban economy grew 0.5 per cent instead of contracting by 0.9 per cent as originally reported, growth for 2017 is estimated at 1.6 per cent. This means that, over the most recent five-year period, the economy grew at an annual average rate of just 2.1 per cent. Industry accounts indicate that the modest growth is explained by the evolution of tourism-related sectors (transport, trade and hotels and restaurants), agriculture and construction. Regarding manufacturing, official statements indicate that production has been hampered by limited availability of intermediate goods. This has been particularly evident in the manufacturing of hygiene products.

The Cuban authorities forecast growth of 2 per cent for 2018. However, because of significant uncertainty regarding the impact of recent United States policy changes on the flow of visitors and investment to Cuba, ECLAC expects a growth interval of 1.6 per cent to 2 per cent.

Current data on the evolution of consumer prices are not yet available; however, available information points to marginal increases in consumer price inflation during 2017, owing to the effects of price controls in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

Official estimates point to an unemployment rate of 2 per cent, similar to that of 2016, in a context of decline in the economically active population, due to population ageing, as well as a growing share of employment in the non-state sector. Nominal wage growth slowed from 7.7 per cent in 2016 to 1.6 per cent in 2017, and monthly wages averaged 750 Cuban pesos over the year. In August 2017 the Government of Cuba temporarily halted the issuance of new self-employment licenses, which as of May 2018 have not yet resumed.

IV. United States economic embargo: recent developments

Since February 1962, the Government of the United States has maintained a comprehensive economic embargo on Cuba. It is based on several statutes, including the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, the Helms-Burton Act (Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act) of 1996, the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, sections 5 and 16 of the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The implementation of the blockade is the responsibility of the Departments of Commerce and the Treasury.

The United States and Cuba resumed diplomatic relations in July 2015, after these had been severed in January 1961. As a result, there has been a gradual effort to lift some restrictions on travel and telecommunications, financial services, remittances and flights. The most significant steps towards the normalization of bilateral relations between the Government of the United States and the Government of Cuba include the following:

- Re-establishment of diplomatic relations
- Removal of the Government of Cuba from the Department of State's list of state sponsors of terrorism
- Advancement of travel, trade and promotion of microenterprises in Cuba and the flow of information to and from the island
- Resumption of commercial flights between Cuba and the United States
- Withdrawal of certain barriers in financial services

In practice, progress in certain areas has been limited. For example, although part of the easing of requirements meant that Cuba could use the United States dollar in foreign transactions from March 2016, to date no Cuban transaction in United States dollars have taken place owing to caution on the part of third-country banks concerned about the possibility of fines.

Notwithstanding progress towards normalizing bilateral relations, according to Cuban officials, enforcement of the embargo has intensified in recent years. On 16 June 2017, the Government of the United States issued a policy memorandum[1] announcing several changes in its policy towards Cuba, in which several government departments were instructed to review the relevant regulations. This process was finalized on 9 November 2017, when the new regulations took effect. The main regulatory changes include the following:

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[1] See www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/10/20/2017-22928/strengthening-the-policy-of-the-united-states-toward-cuba.

- Individuals and enterprises subject to United States jurisdiction are prohibited from engaging in certain direct financial transactions with entities included in the "Cuba Restricted List" maintained by the Department of State. With certain exceptions, these include entities which, according to the State Department, have close ties to Cuba's military, intelligence or security services, including the Mariel Special Development Zone and the container terminals in Mariel and Havana. Importantly, exceptions include sending, processing and receipt of family remittances.
- The Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce adopted a general policy of denying licences to export items from the United States to entities included in the restricted list, while streamlining the authorization of exceptions for exports destined for the Cuban private sector.
- The Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury prohibited individual people-to-people non-academic educational travel. The new regulations specify that all people-to-people and educational travel should be conducted under the auspices of organizations subject to United States jurisdiction that sponsor such exchanges, and in the company of a representative from such an organization. For the travel category entitled "support for the Cuban people", the regulations require a full schedule of activities.

Although the United States signed a maritime boundary treaty with Cuba in January 2017, it has not been sent to the Senate, whose ratification is necessary for the treaty to come into effect. The treaty delimits mineral rights in the Eastern Gap area of the Gulf of Mexico, which lies within the overlapping margins of the continental shelf claims of Cuba, the United States and Mexico.

In mid-July 2017, the current United States Administration renewed the suspension of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, which allows United States citizens to sue entities trading in non-residential property valued at over $50,000 in 1959 and to which United States citizens had claims prior to expropriation by Cuban authorities.

Following the health incidents reported by some of its personnel in Havana, on 29 September 2017, the United States Department of State ordered the departure of all staff family members and non-emergency personnel from its embassy in Cuba. On the same date, it issued a warning advising its citizens to avoid travelling to Cuba. The measure was followed by the expulsion of 15 Cuban officials from the Cuban embassy in Washington, D.C., on 3 October 2017. Following the drawdown of personnel at the United States embassy in Havana — which was made permanent on 2 March 2018, immigrant visa services were transferred to the United States embassy in Bogotá and Citizen and Immigration Services to the United States embassy in Mexico City. On 29 March 2018, it was announced that immigrant visa services would be gradually transferred to the United States embassy in Georgetown, Guyana.

As part of the revised policy on Cuba, on 23 January 2018 the Department of State convened a Cuba Internet Task Force with the stated objective of expanding Internet access and media freedom in Cuba. The Task Force's inaugural meeting took place on 7 February 2018. The Government of Cuba filed a formal complaint with the United States embassy in Cuba, arguing that the initiative represented a violation of sovereignty and a threat to the country's constitutional order.

The main effects of the embargo on the Cuban economy are those stemming from forgone income from exporting goods and services to the United States, the limitations imposed by having to source goods and services from third countries and restrictions on finance and investment owing to the inability to carry out financial transactions with United States institutions. The long-standing imprint of the embargo on Cuba's economic structure and its forgone development opportunities is immense and will continue. Eighty per cent of Cubans, including the country's new President, were born under the embargo.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

Overall situation: effects of the embargo on the sectors of food security, agriculture, fisheries and the food industry

The main changes since the previous reporting period can be summarized as follows:

(a) The cereal production of Cuba in 2017 is estimated at 737,000 tons (rice in milled equivalent), slightly below its 2016 level and about 5 per cent lower than the country's five-year average, mainly as a result of the severe damage caused by Hurricane Irma in early September 2017;

(b) Paddy production in Cuba is estimated to have registered a minor annual increase in 2017, reaching 520,000 tons (347,000 tons, milled equivalent), as growth was constrained by limited availability of water for irrigation and by damage caused by Hurricane Irma. Preliminary prospects for the 2018 season point to a more notable production increase, amid improved water supply and local efforts to improve productivity levels. The production of maize in 2017 is estimated at 390,000 tons, 3 per cent below the 2016 output. The decline mainly reflects crop losses as a result of damage caused by Hurricane Irma. Nonetheless, imported volumes of cereals have remained steady in recent years, around 2 million tons, covering about two thirds of the country's domestic utilization.

The main effects of the embargo on agriculture, fisheries, livestock and the food industry should continue to be viewed from two different perspectives:

(a) The impossibility of taking full advantage of the export potential (i.e. coffee, honey, tobacco, live lobsters and aquaculture products) to the nearest market (the United States) has implied major losses, since it has been necessary to sell to markets located farther away, with the resultant higher marketing and distribution costs, which negatively affects the country's foreign exchange earnings and its capacity to purchase basic products, especially food;

(b) The high costs of inputs needed for agricultural, fisheries and livestock production (fuel, spare parts for agricultural machinery, animal feeds, phyto- and zoo-sanitary products and fertilizers, products such as herbicides, low toxicity insecticides and other highly effective pesticides or veterinary pharmaceuticals and disease diagnostic kits which in many cases are only produced by United States firms) reduce profitability and lower the country's ability to satisfy local food demand.

Overall, the embargo has very negative implications for Cuba's balance of trade and foreign exchange earnings, as well as for the country's supply of food and agriculture products. One of the bottlenecks that the Government of Cuba is facing in its ongoing economic update process is its acute shortage of foreign currency. The main source of foreign currency expenditure is the purchase of agricultural products, amounting to around $800 million per year.

The embargo affects the import of food products for human consumption, particularly those destined for social programmes, as the embargo restricts their quantity and quality, thus having a direct effect on the food security of the vulnerable segments of the population. The overall economic damage in the agricultural sector between June 2015 and May 2016 is estimated to be $183,517,429.

An additional problem resulting from the embargo relates to the difficulty for Cuba to access external multilateral financing for development programmes in agriculture and rural development in general and the related unavailability of resources for rehabilitating and modernizing agricultural equipment and infrastructure.

It is to be noted that, although the direct impact on the Cuban economy is difficult to measure, in 2016, Cuba and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding on agriculture and related fields. The memorandum is expected to enhance cooperation on issues like sanitary and phytosanitary measures, plant and animal sanitation, standards and forest conservation. In 2017, the countries signed a memorandum of understanding on animal and plant health, which aims to improve cooperation in the fields of animal and plant health, protection and quarantine.

Even the operations of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are directly affected, although it is officially exempted from the embargo. Delays in or blocking of payments to FAO staff (even if made in euros) and to providers for project procurement reduces the willingness of suppliers to sell to FAO-Cuba and increases the cost of procurement from the few remaining suppliers.

Effects of the embargo on selected agricultural commodities

Cereals

The economic damage for cereal production as a result of the embargo is estimated at $2,447,830. Of this amount, an estimated $571,830 results from price differentials between procurement of inputs from the United States and from more distant and expensive markets. Of particular impact is the difficulty in obtaining quality seeds, exacerbated by the fact that the international seed market is dominated by a few multinational companies. The economic damage due to this factor is estimated at $1,057,125.

Estimates of the 2017 cereal production (milled rice equivalent) in Cuba point to an output level of 737,000 tons, a slight decrease from 2016. Efforts to shore up rice production in Cuba are concentrated on fostering yield gains through investments in irrigation and drainage infrastructure, as well as improved growing practices. In the absence of major disruptions, such endeavours are likely to sustain additional productivity improvements over the course of the 2018 season. The outlook for paddy plantings is also more promising, as above-average rains in the fourth quarter of 2017 helped restore storage levels in major reservoirs, after these had been constrained by successive years of drought. These factors are tentatively forecast to translate into an 8 per cent expansion in Cuban paddy production in 2018 to 560,000 tons (374,000 tons, milled equivalent).

Despite ongoing Government efforts to liberalize and promote domestic production, Cuba remains highly dependent on rice imports. In calendar year 2018, Cuba is expected to require some 470,000 tons of rice imports to meet consumption needs. As in previous years, Viet Nam is likely to provide the bulk of this volume through government-to-government arrangements that allow Cuba to defer payments of purchases. The balance is supplied by South American exporters, namely Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, with Guyana also emerging as a rice supplier to Cuba in 2017. Because of restrictions on payment and financing options imposed by the embargo, as well as the more advantageous terms provided by alternate rice exporters, virtually no United States rice has been shipped to Cuba since 2008. Still, the United States rice industry supports an easing of the embargo, maintaining that it could provide up to 30 per cent of Cuba's rice imports within two years of the lifting of the embargo, owing to the commercial advantage provided by the countries' geographical proximity. In the case of coarse grains, imports are projected to be on the order of 800,000 tons in 2017/18 (July/June); while wheat imports are expected to reach about 780,000 tons. Overall, cereal imports account for about two thirds of domestic consumption.

Oilseeds

Oilseed production in Cuba is not significant and, as a result, the country depends almost entirely on imports to meet its vegetable oil and meal needs. Commodities dominating imports are soybeans, soybean oil and soybean meal. When the United States embargo came into effect, Brazil and Argentina became the main suppliers of soybeans and derived products. Both Mexico and Canada have occasionally shipped small volumes to Cuba. Cuba has imported non-soybean oilseed products from Argentina, Canada, China, Mexico and the European Union. Imports of soybeans and derived products from the United States resumed in 2002. In that year, following the implementation of the United States Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act, and owing to geographic proximity, the United States became Cuba's principal supplier of soybeans, soybean oil and soybean meal, largely replacing deliveries from other regions. However, in the second half of the 2000s, United States sales of soybean and soy products to Cuba have been in part replaced by more competitive offers from Argentina and Brazil. The effect of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba in 2015 on trade flows remains unclear. Soybean imports from the United States decreased until 2015, but rose again in 2016 and 2017. By contrast, soy cake purchases dropped to a multi-year low in 2017, while soybean oil and soybean flour/meal transactions were only reported in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Raw sugar

According to the latest estimates of FAO, sugar production in Cuba increased by 12 per cent in 2016/17, compared with 2015/16, reaching 1.8 million tons, a production level not seen since 2004. Better sugar recovery rates, coupled with greater harvested areas account for the increase, as the restructuring of the subsector continued. Sugar consumption, on the other hand, remained relatively unchanged at 0.6 million tons, leading to a 12 per cent growth in sugar exports for the 2016/17 marketing season, with the main destinations being China and Russia. Early estimates for 2017/18 show sugar production to remain at the same level as in 2016/17, as harvesting operations were affected by Hurricane Irma. Over the years, the embargo has resulted in reduced availability of spare parts and agricultural inputs, which affected productivity in the subsector. Sugar production in Cuba was one of the most important subsectors of the country, with output totalling 8 million tons in 1991. As part of an ambitious objective to increase the use of bioenergy, the Government of Cuba has recently elaborated a plan to expand the capacity of the country to produce electricity from sugar cane leftovers. Bioelectric plants are to be established in 27 sugar mills across the island, with incentives to attract foreign investment.

Meat

National meat production has been growing by 5 per cent on average since 2010 and stood at 364,000 tons in 2017. Pork is the most important category, followed by beef and poultry. Cuba imported 332,000 tons of meat in 2017. The main type of meat imported is poultry, followed by beef and pork. In 2017, 284,000 tons of poultry were imported, 72 per cent of which originated in the United States, while a further 22 per cent was supplied by Brazil. Brazil, Canada, Mexico and the European Union, are the main sources of imports of beef and pork. The damage to the economy arising from the slow growth in the meat industry is significant, especially as a result of the high import cost for animal feed; the price differential for importing animal feed from distant markets and difficulties in accessing modern production technologies, manufacturing and distribution systems, veterinary pharmaceuticals and other inputs. Despite the recent changes in government policy in favour of the development of national agriculture, restrictions on access to financial resources and technologies have made it difficult to develop farm-related infrastructure and increase agricultural productivity. Restrictions on the import of technology and genetics prevent the Government from using the least expensive or most convenient sources of supplies.

Dairy products

Milk production in Cuba has not increased significantly since 2013 and is estimated at 622,000 tons for 2017. Dairy imports, mainly milk powder, account for nearly 80 per cent of national consumption, with supplies coming from Europe, Latin America and Oceania, especially New Zealand. Milk powder alone accounts for over $400 million, equivalent to 20 per cent of total foreign currency expenditures. Thus, development of the dairy sector is a high priority for the Government in its drive towards food and nutrition security. However, the dairy sector is facing many challenges, including limited herd size, high costs of animal feed and limited availability of fuel and transport equipment. Removing these constraints will be necessary in order to develop the sector to ensure food and nutrition security.

Fish products

Fish products are important for food security in Cuba as a source of nutrition and earning from exports. In 2016, capture fisheries production reached 23,540 tons, a decline of 8 per cent compared with 2015 and of over 90 per cent compared with 1986, when the country also fished in distant waters. The potential for expansion of capture fisheries is limited and focused on the adoption of a management approach that allows for the recovery of fish stocks that may have suffered overfishing. The greatest potential for expansion lies in aquaculture, which has shown some fluctuations during the past few years and represented 29,200 tons in 2016 (9 per cent less than in 2015). Almost all of Cuba's fish exports consist of high-value products, notably frozen lobster and shrimp, which are in high demand on the international market. However, the embargo prevents access to the United States market, which is one of the most important markets and the leading world importer for fish and fish products. As a result, Cuba exports to more distant destinations, facing higher marketing and distribution costs. In addition, the economic crisis in some of its markets had a negative impact on demand from 2012 to 2014, resulting in a decline in exports. In 2016, as a result of improved demand, exports reached an estimated $69 million, representing an increase of 30 per cent compared with 2015, but a decline of 21 per cent compared with 2007 and of 29 percent compared with 1997. Fish imports, consisting mainly of low-value fish products, increased by 3 per cent in 2016, compared with 2015, reaching an estimated $43 million.

Fruit

The economic impact of the embargo on the fruit sector is estimated at more than $75,907.30 owing to the difference in prices owing to the changes in the import market.

Coffee

The economic impact of the embargo on the coffee sector is estimated at $7,686,000 due to the lack of production goods.

Pork

The economic impact is estimated at $2,705,700 owing to the lack of access to United States technology for the pig farms, the manufacturing systems, food distribution, food quality, medicines and other goods.

Honey

The economic impact of the embargo is estimated at $13,487,129 as a result of lost income from potential sales to the United States market.

Forestry

The economic impact of the embargo is estimated at $13,300,000 as a result of standstills and losses in the production process. In Cuba, most of the means of extraction and the sawmills use technology from the United States that is now obsolete.

Technical assistance to Cuba by the by the Food and Agriculture Organization

The Food and Agriculture Organization continues to provide support to Cuba, notably in promoting rural development and fisheries with emphasis on food security. In addition, FAO has assisted Cuban institutions in organizing several international congresses and events in the areas of sustainable agriculture, organic agriculture, animal production and animal health surveillance; cooperatives and family farming; fisheries and related policies; forestry and biodiversity; environment and climate change, among others. In addition, FAO assists Cuban experts in providing help for South-South cooperation and in attending meetings on international conventions and agreements; travel logistics and flight bookings also are affected by the embargo.

In the context of South-South cooperation, FAO is supporting the Cuban participation in a joint activity with the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health for the eradication of the classic swine pest in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

Technical support for the life-cycle management of pesticides continues to be provided to Cuba as part of the regional initiatives under the project funded by the European Commission to support capacity-building related to multilateral environmental agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, for the clean-up of obsolete pesticides, pesticides management and sustainable pest management. The project has supported the inventory of obsolete pesticides, strengthening pesticide registration and raising awareness of pesticide issues. Cuba participates in workshops in the framework of the project.

Policy and technical support has been provided to update the national agricultural policy, with particular emphasis on the dairy sector, as this constitutes one of the most important components of the food basket, as well as being a major economic engine for the generation of employment and income in rural areas. Technical assistance has focused on assessing the productivity level of different forms of industrial organizations and assisting the Government in identifying policy recommendations to strengthen the industrial set-up of the national dairy sector.

The Food and Agriculture Organization provided technical support and assistance to develop tools for Cuba to establish its national information system mechanism for applying the new monitoring approach for the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Cuban delegation participates routinely, through the FAO Commission and its intergovernmental working group on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, in the development of the policy framework of the Second

Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, indicators and targets for plant genetic resources and in the preparation of gene bank standards for plant genetic resources.

Policy advice is provided for agricultural sector policies, agro environmental policies, rural youth employment and the development of sustainable intensification programmes based on FAO pilot projects in the grain, milk and beef value chains. In addition, FAO is assisting Cuba in projects focusing on rehabilitation and conservation of the environment, particularly in managed landscapes and in resilience to the risks associated with climate change.

Effects of the embargo on projects implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization in Cuba

Given the situation of the embargo to which Cuba is subjected, projects implemented by FAO in the country are affected in regard to the procurement of equipment and supplies that complement the activities of technical assistance provided by FAO because the resources that could be imported from the United States have to be imported from more distant markets, at much higher prices and higher freight costs. If acquisitions could be made in the United States, it would be much cheaper and more activities would be supported by the available budget.

The remaining embargo conditions hinder the processes of payments and banking transactions to and from suppliers who provide services to cooperation projects and to the FAO country office. This is demonstrated by banks rejecting transfers from FAO for sales to Cuba; the impossibility for suppliers to offer products to Cuba obtained from other United States companies; and the inability of suppliers to transfer funds to Cuba for payment of services contracted in the country.

Conditions affecting banking processes for FAO staff arising from expensive and drawn-out formalities also remain.

A summary of damages caused by the embargo in some of the sectors in which FAO is providing technical assistance and other sectors included within its country programme framework is presented below.

The impact originated essentially in:

(a) Price difference owing to changes in the import market;

(b) Additional costs related to freight insurance;

(c) Additional costs due to a freeze on assets;

(d) Monetary damages;

(e) Financial losses due to lack of access to the latest technology from the United States;

(f) Relocation of exports.

International Atomic Energy Agency

[Original: English]
[18 May 2018]

The assistance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to all of its member States, including Cuba, are governed by article III/C of its statute, which reads as follows: "In carrying out its functions, the Agency shall not make assistance to members subject to any political, economic, military, or other conditions incompatible with the provisions of this Statute".

However, the existing embargo poses certain difficulties for the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA in Cuba. For instance, the procurement of essential equipment such as radiopharmaceuticals and consumables needed for studies using stable isotope techniques is quite often subject to cost increases and considerable time delays as the vendors willing and able to procure for and/or ship to Cuba is very limited. Restrictions also apply to the participation of Cuban nationals in training activities, fellowships and meetings funded by or taking place in the United States. Furthermore, difficulties with Internet and satellite connections also affect their participation in online courses offered through the information technology platforms of the IAEA.

In accordance with the above-mentioned article, IAEA tries to overcome these difficulties, to the extent possible, by sending Cuban nationals for training to other countries, in order to meet the requirements of Programme.

International Civil Aviation Organization

[Original: English]
[31 May 2018]

In the light of the updated 2016 resolution of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly on continuing ICAO policies in the air transport field (A39-15), which urged States members of ICAO to avoid adopting unilateral and extraterritorial measures that may affect the orderly, sustainable and harmonious development of international air transport and to ensure that domestic policies and legislation are not applied to international air transport without taking due account of its special characteristics, ICAO continued to monitor developments and, where possible and appropriate, work with Cuba and the United States to improve their civil aviation relations.

Cuba continued its active participation as a member of several regional projects implemented through the ICAO Technical Cooperation Bureau. The objective of the first project is to provide administrative assistance in the management and administration of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission secretariat. The second relates to fostering the implementation of performance-based air navigation systems in the Caribbean region leading to a seamless global air traffic management system. The third concerns the regional safety oversight system, which encompasses the requisite technical, logistical and administrative support in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and its annexes.

With regards to training, ICAO cooperates with the Centro de Adiestramiento de la Aviación, a governmental training organization. This centre is recognized as a member of the ICAO TRAINAIR PLUS Programme network. Since the Centro joined the Programme in 2012, in addition to developing three standardized training packages in the fields of flight safety and safety management, aerodromes and air navigation services, ICAO collaborated with the Centro to deliver a standardized training package related to those services in 2017, in order to support local aviation capacity-building.

International Civil Defence Organization

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

The International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) reaffirms its view that the United Nations is an appropriate forum in which to address questions related to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. It therefore welcomes the positive consideration of resolution 72/4, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2017, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Cuba became a full member of the International Civil Defence Organization on 18 December 2014. Its needs are great in all the four steps related to disaster management: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Thus, and to fulfil its obligations towards its member States, ICDO is in the process of providing technical assistance in different areas of civil defence in Cuba, by transferring equipment and technology and supporting training courses in civil defence.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

[Original: English]
[11 June 2018]

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) notes that like other small island developing States in the Caribbean, the Cuban economy is characterized by difficult access to international markets, high dependency on imports and tourism and high vulnerability to external economic and environmental shocks.

The challenges faced by Cuba appear to be exacerbated by the existing trade and financial restrictions. In particular, in the agricultural and rural sector the following may be contributing factors to reduced productivity levels; low quantity, quality and competitiveness of domestic food production; and higher levels of food imports to cover the needs of the population. The limitations include:

- Obsolete agricultural equipment (e.g. tractors, irrigation systems, water pumps) and a lack of spare parts;
- High cost and a lack of inputs required for agricultural and livestock production, processing and distribution (e.g. fuel, animal feed, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, veterinary pharmaceuticals);
- Lengthy import procedures and high costs of imports (due to limited international competition);
- Insufficient access to hard currency financing for the import of equipment and inputs;
- Limited access to providers of new agricultural technologies;
- Limited export opportunities for some agricultural products.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development maintains an open dialogue with the Government of Cuba, through its representatives in Italy, as well as with in-country counterparts, on all matters pertaining to rural development, agricultural production and food security in the country. Cuba also participates in the Governing Council of IFAD's as a member State and the country has been reintegrated into the regular lending and programme of work since September 2012. In addition, IFAD keeps a fluid dialogue and cooperates with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other United Nations entities present in the country.

In September 2013, IFAD approved a project for Cuba on cooperative rural development in the eastern region, with IFAD financing of $10.7 million and which is expected to benefit some 13,000 rural households living in 157 private cooperatives in the four provinces of Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma and Santiago de Cuba. The project was signed in November 2013, entered into force in July 2014 and is currently in its fourth year of implementation.

In December 2016, IFAD approved a project on cooperative cattle development in the central and eastern regions, with IFAD financing of $11.9 million, which focuses on milk and meat production in 105 cooperatives in the province of Camagüey and is expected to benefit some 11,500 rural households. The project was signed in January 2017 and entered into force in January 2018.

Both projects have experienced some implementation challenges as a result of existing restrictions.

International Labour Organization

[Original: English]
[17 May 2018]

The International Labour Organization (ILO) observes with concern that after the progress made between Cuba and the United States in normalizing and improving their relationship, the embargo measures have intensified, which has had a dissuasive effect on potential investors, affecting indirectly, and even directly, economic development perspectives and therefore job creation and decent work. Among the elements of the embargo still in place are:

- Unnecessary restrictions on the transfer of remittances still imply a high indirect tax burden on salaries legitimately earned abroad and sent for household spending on basic human needs such as food, clothing, education, housing, water and sanitation;
- Limitations of other financial transactions, for example, for Cuban banks opening accounts in the United States or access to credit for trade operations, still represent a serious bottleneck and additional cost burden for business development and job creation, as decent work largely depends on productive investment and access to financing;
- Limited access to technology transfer implies further difficulties for enterprise, social and economic development.

The direct and indirect effects of the embargo on the Cuban economy and its people affect not only the enterprises, but even more their workers and the population in general. ILO is particularly concerned about the impact on children, workers and the elderly. Ending the embargo would turn the overall loss into an opportunity for productive investment, employment generation and new job opportunities.

Cuba is a deputy member of the ILO Governing Body and will actively participate in the 107th International Labour Conference (28 May to 8 June 2018). ILO considers that the General Assembly is the appropriate forum for addressing questions related to ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

International Maritime Organization

[Original: English]
[10 May 2018]

As a State member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Cuba participates in the meetings of IMO bodies and is a recipient of the available technical cooperation programmes (IMO regional programmes on support to maritime development in Latin America, support to maritime development in the Caribbean and global programmes as applicable).

The International Maritime Organization maintains collaborative relations with all Latin American States members, including Cuba. Since the early 1980s, IMO has collaborated closely with the Operative Network for Regional Cooperation among Maritime Authorities of the Americas, a Latin American maritime network which includes South America, Cuba, Mexico and Panama.

The assistance of IMO to Latin America is guided by the maritime strategies of the region which are revised every five years and the organization will continue to focus on supporting their implementation. Countries in the Operative Network have addressed issues such as safety standards and training aspects and also marine environment protection through regional strategies, with numerous training activities organized in cooperation with IMO. In this context, and in accordance with the decentralization policies adopted by IMO, most of its support is channelled through the Operative Network by virtue of a memorandum of understanding signed with the secretariat of the Operative Network. Through this instrument, the Operative Network is assigned responsibility for the management and execution of regional technical cooperation activities identified by the respective countries, including Cuba, as priorities in building capacities for the effective implementation and enforcement of the global maritime standards of IMO.

Cuba also receives technical assistance from the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre for the wider Caribbean, a regional activity centre based in Curaçāo which aims to assist countries in the wider Caribbean region in the prevention and response to major pollution incidents in the marine environment.

International Organization for Migration

[Original: English]
[4 July 2018]

Cuba applied for membership of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in a letter dated 21 July 2017. The Director General replied to this letter on 9 October 2017. In November 2017, during the 108th IOM Council, Cuba joined the organization as a full member.

However, the partnership between IOM and Cuba began before that country's accession to membership. For example, IOM provided $150,000 from its emergency resources in response to Hurricane Matthew. With these funds, 820 mattresses were distributed in the municipality of Maisí in January 2017, to benefit 410 affected families and 2,840 roofing sheets for housing were given to 258 affected families.

After Hurricane Irma, the Director General once again approved funding to cover emergency needs. In November 2017, IOM delivered 2,800 mattresses and 2,800 bed sheets to the main municipalities affected in the Villa Clara province.

One of the issues that affected the implementation of the humanitarian response was the payment process. Payments were slowed down by the Office of Foreign Assets Control which requested IOM to send details of the purchase and supporting documents for submission to the bank.

IOM has explored with the Cuban authorities the possibility of adding Cuban experts to its emergency roster, to benefit from Cuba's experience in the protection of populations affected by natural disasters and to learn about best practices.

Currently, through its regional office in San José, IOM and the Cuban national authorities are discussing practical options for technical assistance on border management, the issue of travel documents and data management.

Cuba has participated actively in the Global Compact on Migration and the Cuban Government has sent participants to the Inter-American Course on International Migration, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, for the last six years.

International Telecommunication Union

[Original: English]
[21 May 2018]

During the period in question, the International Telecommunication Union received in relation to General Assembly resolution 72/4 the following correspondence: note N. 208/2018 dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland addressed to the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has for many years held the view that "economic sanctions should be avoided as far as possible [...] to ensure international peace and security". In April 2017, IPU adopted a resolution, by consensus, on the role of parliament in respecting the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, at its 136th Assembly, held in Dhaka. The resolution underscores that "the people of each country have the inalienable right to determine their own political future, and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development, in accordance with international law".

The Inter-Parliamentary Union welcomes the efforts by the United States and Cuba to improve their relations. IPU was delighted to learn that, as in previous years, a delegation of United States legislators visited Cuba in February 2018 to discuss greater cooperation between the two countries and to find ways to work together on issues of mutual concern. IPU is very hopeful that this kind of initiative will contribute to the lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States. IPU is convinced that political dialogue is critical to building bridges and creating the conditions for lasting peace and understanding among peoples.

The IPU would like to restate its firm support for the lifting of the economic embargo against Cuba and express its solidarity with the Cuban people who continue to suffer from its consequences.

Office for Outer Space Affairs

[Original: English]
[26 April 2018]

Cuba has been a State member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space since 2001. Between 1994 and 2001, Cuba participated in the work of the Committee and its subcommittees, following the Committee's practice of sharing seats on a rotating basis. Since the early 1980s, Cuba has regularly attended the sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees as an observer.

In 1990, Cuba organized, jointly with the Office for Outer Space Affairs, a workshop on the theme "Space Communications for Development", held in Havana, from 26 to 30 March 1990. In 2012, Cuban experts benefited from participating in a workshop on the theme "Contribution of space law to economic and social development", held in Buenos Aires, from 5 to 8 November 2012 (see A/AC.105/1037).

The potential for disasters as a result of natural hazards, such as hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, droughts, floods and heat waves, is high in the Caribbean. In the course of multiple crises over the years, the Government of Cuba has put in place an efficient and unique alert system reaching all corners of the country. However, the use of satellite-based data, as well as of precise positioning and navigation systems or of modern satellite telecommunication, by its civil protection agency could improve the precision of the alert system and increase the time available for notifying the population, while providing for improved planning and preparedness. The integration of these tools in the existing systems in Cuba would be greatly facilitated by well-structured participation of all stakeholders at the various levels of administration in Cuba.

The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) implemented by the Office for Outer Space Affairs ensures "that all countries and international and regional organizations have access to and develop the capacity to use all types of space-based information to support the full disaster management cycle". The Platform is achieving its mission by focusing on being a gateway to space information for disaster management support, by serving as a bridge to connect the disaster management, risk management and space communities and by being a facilitator of capacity building and institutional strengthening. UN-SPIDER is supported by 21 regional support offices (including 5 in Latin America), all of which are crucial to fulfilling the mission of the Platform.

Since 2009, the Platform has provided detailed advisory services to six countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region: the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Jamaica. That support has allowed Governments to set priorities to strengthen their capabilities in discovering, accessing and using space-based data, information, products and services, helping to reduce the vulnerability of their population and infrastructure in the face of natural hazards.

Finally, in support of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Office for Outer Space Affairs has set up a global partnership using space-based technology applications for disaster risk reduction and is a key member of the International Network on Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems. Those mechanisms put space technology and applications forward as a critical set of tools to plan, prepare, measure and monitor the efforts of nations in reducing risks associated to natural hazards.

A technical advisory mission of the Platform, through a Spanish-speaking international expert team that, consulting key entities in Cuba with responsibilities or potential roles in disaster risk reduction and emergency response, would allow the assessment not only of the current capabilities but also of the priorities for action. Such a mission could be planned and executed in 2019 or 2020, funds permitting, delivering clear recommendations for the consideration of the Government of Cuba.

Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system for operational activities for development, Cuba

[Original: English]
[27 June 2018]

Cuba is a country with a high human development index. National authorities have expressed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Government of Cuba is implementing a transformation process to update its economic model, focusing on national priorities, such as economic efficiency and productivity, the national food security strategy and import substitution policies. National authorities have stated their strong commitment to maintaining social development standards. Economic and social policy guidelines address the fundamental principles of such process. These guidelines can be found in the document "Social and economic policy guidelines", which was approved in April 2011 and updated at the Seventh Communist Party Congress, held in April 2016. One of the guidelines calls for the promotion of multilateral collaboration, with reference to the entities of the United Nations system. The Congress also approved the conceptualization of the Cuban economic and social model and 2030 national plan for economic and social development. In this context, the United Nations system supports the efforts of national authorities to address emerging issues and development challenges.

The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2014–2019) supports sustainable development priorities, focusing on four strategic cooperation areas: population dynamics and social and/or cultural services; sustainable economic development, which includes value chains, local development and sustainable energy development; food security; and environmental sustainability and disaster risk management.

In 2017, Hurricane Irma directly impacted Cuba for three days. Around 2 million people were evacuated, the largest number ever compared to previous similar events. It caused devastating damage and resulted in widespread and significant humanitarian needs. Thirty-one municipalities (out of 168), with almost 2.2 million inhabitants, were severely affected. Homes collapsed and extensive damage to roofs was reported. More than 3.1 million people also had limited access to potable water and proper sanitation. While hospitals and health centres remained operational, more than 70 per cent of health institutions were damaged in the affected areas; many of them suffered structural damages. In addition, many educational facilities were severely damaged.

The diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba had experienced an improvement. However, in the last year, under the administration of President Donald Trump, many of the measures taken by the administration of President Barack Obama to reduce the restrictions of the embargo were reverted with a negative impact on the Cuban society, particularly in commerce and financial activities, as well as on United Nations operations in the country. The situation has worsened, particularly after the departure of non-emergency personnel assigned to the United States embassy in Havana, as well as of all family members of remaining personnel because of an alleged attack against United States diplomats.

The embargo maintains restrictions on the use of the United States dollar and restrictions relating to imports from Cuba. The embargo affects opportunities for national and local development and creates economic hardship for the population. It has an impact on the population's most vulnerable groups, and on human development in general.

The United Nations country team in Cuba comprises the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO). In addition, non-resident entities, including the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Labour Organization, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Volunteers programme have ongoing activities and initiatives in Cuba.

Each United Nations agency, fund and programme has provided individual inputs to the present report. The submission by the United Nations country team in Cuba summarizes the most significant cross-cutting issues that are having a negative impact on the humanitarian and development cooperation of the United Nations system in Cuba.

Impact on the Cuban people

The embargo affects the ability of Cuban programmes to ensure continued quality and universal public services like health and education, owing to the existence of commercial restrictions that prevent the purchase of health supplies and teaching materials from United States companies. There are items that cannot be acquired because they are made in the United States or have United States components, including technologies, that can save, prolong or increase the quality of life.

The implementation of the embargo has posed obstacles to Cuba's access to technology and the equipment needed for advanced learning, scientific research and innovation. Participation in exchanges of experiences in the framework of international workshops, conferences and seminars is limited for Cuban scientists and health professionals because of the embargo. Cuban participation in online trainings has been affected by the adoption of the CISCO WebEx platform by WHO/PAHO. Tests carried out by health institutions show that CISCO does not provide WebEx services for Cuba, affecting all health institutions.

High costs to import agriculture equipment or inputs, caused by the embargo, are a limiting factor for agricultural productivity in Cuba, affecting the country's ability to produce its food requirements. The need to import a considerable proportion of food commodities to meet the requirement of its national food-based social safety net programmes represents a significant budgetary burden for the country, threatens those most dependent on social safety nets and poses challenges to food security in Cuba.

The departure of nonemergency personnel assigned to the United States embassy in Havana has led to Cubans having to travel, when possible, to third countries to apply for a United States visa.

Although there have been agreements in the telecommunications sector for direct interconnections with four United States companies, they have not been implemented, partly because of technical challenges related to the embargo and partly because of domestic policy and infrastructure issues.

Impact on the Cuban economy

The embargo has limited Cuba's access to development credits granted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, which has narrowed the possibility of obtaining resources to provide financial support for Cuba's national and/or local development plans.

In the context of updating the Cuban economic model, the embargo also limits the participation of foreign investors, in particular United States companies, in prioritized economic projects, including the special development zone in Mariel. In that regard, the embargo negatively affects investment flows and limits access to regional and global value chains.

Cuban companies, and foreign companies established in Cuba, cannot purchase products, components or technologies from the United States even though the United States is the closest, most competitive and most diversified market. Alternative markets are more distant, resulting in higher import costs and delays in delivery time.

Goods, services or technologies produced by the United States, covered by United States patents or containing any component produced and/or patented by the United States are not available to Cuba. In addition, the embargo places restrictions on shipping line companies whose vessels dock in Cuban harbours. This situation significantly reduces the number of shipping companies that include Cuba in their routes, limiting the availability of transportation and delaying the loading and delivery of goods. The export sector is also affected by the enforcement of the embargo as it limits the proper promotion, dissemination and marketing of Cuban products. The prohibition of bank transactions with Cuba prevents direct transactions with the United States regarding the sale of goods and services.

Impact on United Nations operations

The above-mentioned restrictions cause critical difficulties for the implementation of United Nations programmes and projects, in particular in the acquisition and purchasing of development and humanitarian products, such as medicines, medical equipment, fertilizers, food supplements, laboratory equipment, agricultural implements, educational tools, computers, information and communications software, construction materials and bibliographic resources, even if they are purchased through multilateral cooperation. These products are purchased from third countries and from secondary suppliers at prices significantly higher than those of comparable products sold on the international market. Even when long-term corporate agreements with international suppliers apply to the projects in Cuba, the providers must obtain a license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control to deliver services or products to projects in Cuba, a bureaucratic process that takes time and effort.

The increase in costs for transportation and freight, charged in commodities and related materials that need to be purchased in other regions, is also significant. The procurement and shipment of food and non-food commodities are delayed owing to the above-mentioned logistical challenges. As a result of the embargo, vessels are obliged to make a stopover in a neighbouring country for trans-shipment, causing delays and additional costs that also affect United Nations shipments. This was the case, for example, during the World Food Programme response to Hurricane Irma.

Therefore, financial proposals and new projects must include an extended period for procurement processes in their design and they also have to allocate additional financial resources that could otherwise be allocated to development activities.

At a financial level, the embargo prevents United Nations country offices in Cuba from making transfers in United States dollars. For this reason, and although budgets of all projects are recorded in United States dollars, transfers abroad must be made in another currency. However, even when payments are made in another currency, bank withholdings have significantly increased as a result of requests for additional information by banks to comply with the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Treasury all along the banking chain system (issuing, intermediate and beneficiary). This measure has affected the ability of the country offices to honour payments to suppliers within the agreed timeframes. During 2017, several financial transfers, related to payments to suppliers of goods, were returned by Multibank, Panama (the suppliers' bank), due to concerns related to financial sanctions that would be imposed on the bank if it performed those operations. Challenges to repatriate funds from agencies represented in Cuba to their headquarters in the United States have also been reported.

The embargo continues to obstruct financial transactions conducted by United Nations international and national personnel, as well as banking and insurance services received by said personnel. Local officials find it difficult to use United States-based services, such as transfers to internal bank accounts or between bank accounts. In addition, international personnel with local credit cards or bank accounts generally have difficulties in making payments abroad.

Access to internet services is still limited because of the embargo, which inhibits the efficient use of institutional platforms and slows online processes and activities. Voice and data communications are extremely expensive as they must bypass the United States' telecommunications infrastructure. The embargo also prevents United Nations country offices from directly accessing technical support for products and services from the United States such as CISCO, Dell and Hewlett Packard. The same applies to software licenses. For example, Hewlett Packard holds a long-term agreement with UNDP globally, but it cannot be used by UNDP-Cuba, due to the embargo. The same applies to authorized distributors.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

[Original: English]
[27 June 2018]

In its previous contributions, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stressed the negative human rights impact of extraterritorial sanctions under international law and questioned their legality, based on the latest available reports from the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights to the General Assembly (A/72/370) and to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/36/44).

In June 2017, the United States administration reinstated restrictions such as regulating travel to and engaging in commerce with Cuba.[2] According to the information received by OHCHR, those restrictions have negatively affected the most vulnerable parts of the population by limiting access to basic human rights such as food and medicines at competitive prices, as well as life-saving technology and convertible currency. The fear of retaliation from other countries due to the extraterritoriality of the unilateral coercive measures has jeopardized Cuba's ability to trade with many nations and, for example, to buy goods at affordable prices.

In his report to the General Assembly (A/72/370), the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights shared his concern that the policy of the new United States administration towards Cuba was likely to negatively affect the enjoyment of human rights of the Cuban population. He also mentioned that extraterritorial sanctions may attract the international responsibility of the sanctioning State. The Special Rapporteur, in his report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/36/44), describes the negative effects of the extraterritorial sanctions imposed by the United States on Cuba's ability to conduct commerce with the outside world and access international financial markets. The Special Rapporteur also points at the Helms-Burton Act as a means to block Cuba's access to global financial institutions and to the SWIFT financial messaging system. This has a severe effect in the context of the economic crisis of Cuba.

In October 2017, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 36/10, renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. The resolution also highlighted the need to monitor human rights violations associated with unilateral coercive measures and to promote accountability.

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[2] See www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/10/20/2017-22928/strengthening-the-policy-of-the-united-states-toward-cuba.

A way to independently monitor the impact of unilateral coercive measures in Cuba is for the latter to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which it signed in 2009. Through ratification, Cuba's periodic and independent review will be undertaken by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights upon receipt of the report which is due every five years, submitted pursuant to article 16 of the Covenant. The Committee, in its concluding observations, may highlight the limited access, as a result of the embargo, that Cuba has to many economic and social rights such as the right to food; to certain medicines at affordable prices; and to foreign currency to allow regular trade. In support of this approach, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights is of the view that States' obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are to be extended extraterritorially based on the lack of territorial or jurisdictional limitations of the Covenant and the influence the State party may have on other countries.

Furthermore, upon ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comments 8 and 14 will apply to Cuba. General comment 8 (1997), on the relationship between economic sanctions and respect for economic, social and cultural rights, states it is essential to distinguish between the basic objective of applying political and economic pressure upon the governing elite of a country to persuade them to conform to international law, and the collateral infliction of suffering upon the most vulnerable groups within the targeted country when considering sanctions. The Committee might take this approach into consideration in its periodical review of Cuba.

General comment 14 (2000) to the Covenant, on the right to the highest attainable standard of health, will also apply to Cuba. In particular, paragraph 41 stresses that States party "should refrain at all times from imposing embargoes or similar measures restricting the supply of another State with adequate medicines and medical equipment. Restrictions on such goods should never be used as an instrument of political and economic pressure". In addition, paragraph 42 extends the responsibility regarding the realization of the right to health to all members of society. The general comment also urges other States party to the Covenant "to respect the enjoyment of the right to health in other countries, and to prevent third parties from violating the right in other countries, if they are able to influence these third parties by way of legal or political means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and applicable international law". The general comment also underlines the obligation of States to respect the right to health by abstaining from enforcing discriminatory practices as a state policy. General comments 8 and 14, combined with the extraterritorial implications of unilateral coercive measures on third countries, can be applied to the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba which limits, inter alia, the right to health to the majority of Cubans due to United States intellectual property restrictions on medical goods and the trade restrictions imposed on Cuba.

Country visits by special procedure mandate holders are another independent way of assessing the impact the embargo has on the human rights situation in Cuba. In particular, OHCHR believes that the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights should be invited to undertake a country visit to Cuba in the near future and provide their views and recommendations for action.

In the first cycle of the universal periodic review, Cuba underscored its commitment to continuing to issue invitations to special procedure mandate holders[3] and noted that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was being examined with a view to future accession and/or ratification.[4] In May 2018 at the 30th session of the universal periodic review, several countries recommended Cuba to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These recommendations are still pending response from Cuba as of September 2018.

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[3] See A/HRC/WG.6/16/CUB/1, para. 157.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recommended that the Government of Cuba ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as soon as possible and issue invitations to the relevant special procedure mandate holders mentioned above or issue a standing invitation to all special procedure mandate holders.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

[Original: English]
[22 May2018]

Cuba is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol thereto. Nevertheless, thousands of refugees have found international protection in Cuba over the years and the Government has allowed the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to exercise its mandate to recognize refugees and grant them international protection for almost three decades.

Cuba has maintained its de facto policy of non-refoulement for all refugees recognized under the mandate of UNHCR. In 2017, 33 asylum seekers arrived in Cuba, a decrease from 2016 (89) and 2015 (129). With solutions currently unavailable, the overall population of concern to UNHCR in Cuba has increased in recent years.

Asylum seekers who arrive in Cuba are allowed to remain temporarily in the country while UNHCR conducts refugee status determination and, upon recognition of their status under the Office's mandate, identifies durable solutions for them. In 2017, more than 300 recognized refugees in Cuba were in need of a durable solution. For many refugees, resettlement to a third country is the only possible durable solution. However, the unavailability of resettlement options in 2017 affected to the implementation of this solution.

Cuba has not developed a local integration policy. However, in recent years, a very limited number of refugees was granted permanent resident permits in Cuba on the basis of marriage to a Cuban national, as per the current national legislation. These persons were given a legal status that grants them similar rights and opportunities to nationals.

While the vast majority of refugees are not granted work permits by Cuba, recognized refugees have access to free health care and education provided by the Government, with similar treatment to that enjoyed by Cuban nationals. Many refugees have also been able to benefit from the country's university scholarship programme.

Over the years, Cuba has joined a number of regional frameworks aimed at enhancing international protection and promoting solutions for refugees, stateless persons and other persons of concern to UNHCR. This includes the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, adopted in December 2014. Similarly, Cuba has participated constructively in the formal consultation process leading to the development of the global compact on refugees, as called for in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1).

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[4] Ibid., para. 155 and footnote 117.

If the embargo is ended and a return to normalization of bilateral relations ensues, more favourable conditions may be created for persons of concern to UNHCR in Cuba. Opportunities for local integration could be explored and improved international cooperation could lead to Cuba's accession to the international refugee and statelessness instruments as well as to the adoption of stronger protection measures for persons of concern to UNHCR.

United Nations Children's Fund

[Original: Spanish]
[23 May 2018]

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been working with Cuba since 1962. It established a country office with official representation and national and international staff in 2000. The current five-year country programme is fully aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan, the national priorities of Cuba and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2014–2018, which was extended until 2019 at the request of the Government of Cuba. In 2018, UNICEF is working to develop its new strategy for the country with a view to aligning and harmonizing the next United Nations Development Assistance Framework with the 2030 national economic and social development plan.

UNICEF supports the Government's efforts to maintain past achievements in social policy on universal access and improve service quality in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in three areas: health and nutrition; education; and protection and participation. In this context, the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba continues to affect the ability of Cuban children, adolescents and their families to improve their living conditions and opportunities for development.

Given that certain basic supplies for children's programmes are not produced in the country, they must be obtained from distant markets or through intermediaries, leading to delays and increased costs. This increases the cost of providing social services to women and children, affecting the quality of education, universal healthcare coverage and protection services as well as opportunities for participation, thereby limiting the exercise of these rights.

In the education sector, the embargo has a negative effect on the ability to access study materials, including specialized literature, computers and software, school supplies and art supplies. In the health sector, the results achieved in decreasing infant mortality are at risk because prices continue to increase for medicine, reagents, spare parts for equipment used for diagnoses and treatment, and medical and surgical instruments.

The embargo also causes difficulties in accessing state-of-the-art supplies and technology. Children and adolescents who require specialized, high-quality medical care are deprived of the benefit of technological advances. Specific examples within the sector attest to the problems encountered in procuring supplies. Catheters that are necessary to avoid cardiovascular surgery in certain types of heart disease are difficult to purchase because of the difficulty in obtaining the related licenses. Similarly, it is impossible to purchase cutting-edge paediatric ventricular assist devices because they are only manufactured in the United States. Not having these devices complicates the treatment of post-operative low cardiac output syndrome, a condition that affects approximately 15 per cent of patients and becomes incurable in a group of these children, at least some of whom could survive with these devices.

It is also impossible to procure the extracorporeal membrane oxygenation system for the treatment of children who have undergone cardiovascular surgery and suffer from severe post-operative low cardiac output syndrome due to cardiac dysfunction. Also unavailable are biological materials (heart valves) of optimal quality, manufactured in the United States and used for heart implants, making it necessary to use mechanical valves that need anti-coagulation drugs. This exposes pregnant women who require this surgery to the risk of losing the pregnancy and predisposes them to other complications.

Scientific education at all levels is affected particularly severely by the limits on acquiring computer and information technology systems and audiovisual and laboratory equipment. The embargo also hinders the acquisition of other supplies for specialized education programmes and workshops in primary schools, high schools, and pre-university, technical and vocational institutions; and for the repair and maintenance of the infrastructure of educational institutions.

Education programmes that cater to children with special educational needs are particularly affected in light of the limits on obtaining specific equipment that would enable children with disabilities to reach their learning goals and achieve full social inclusion. That equipment includes electric wheelchairs for children with progressive Duchenne's muscular dystrophy, prostheses for agenesis of members, computer systems and other specialized educational materials.

Effects of the embargo on the operations of UNICEF in Cuba

The aforementioned commercial restrictions also apply to the operations of UNICEF in Cuba, particularly regarding the procurement of supplies for children. Access to the United States market would reduce both costs and time spent in the procurement process. The UNICEF office in Cuba cannot benefit from cost savings that the Fund has achieved globally for the purchase of supplies through the use of global long-term agreements with companies located in the United States. In addition, the use of long-term agreements in 2017 with companies not located in the United States required a permit from the United States Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control to purchase computers for use in the UNICEF office, adding to the time required for their procurement.

Restrictions on bank transfers of United States dollars to and from Cuba continued in 2017. The UNICEF office in Cuba is obliged to use a correspondent bank in Canada to pay back the funds in its local account in United States dollars and perform the transfer in Canadian dollars. This process results in losses of approximately 3.5 per cent of the total value transferred. In 2017, that loss amounted to US$ 40,315.

Similarly, in January and February of 2018, it took up to 21 days to complete cash transfers. Although that situation has been resolved, it placed the UNICEF office at risk of not being able to fulfil its financial obligations. To mitigate such risks in future, the office is maintaining funds in reserve in each of its bank accounts at the end of each month to guarantee the transaction for the following month, an exceptional measure according to the standards for cash flow management at UNICEF.

National staff of the United Nations in Cuba are still able to use the services of the United Nations Federal Credit Union through a special permit issued by the United States Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets. Although the bank accounts were authorized, Cuban staff are limited in their ability to use them. As the accounts are governed by the rules of the Government of the United States, the bank limits the transactions of Cuban staff and makes a distinction between their transactions and transactions that may be performed by staff who are nationals of other States Members of the United Nations not residing in the United States. More specifically, Cuban staff may not receive United States dollars from external banks or transfer funds to other banks. Given that there are no monetary relations between Cuba and the United States, Cuban staff are also unable to withdraw funds from their accounts at automatic teller machines or banks, obtain credit cards, or use debit cards within the country. They can only access their savings from outside Cuba.

The international staff of the United Nations in Cuba are affected when they declare that their country of residence is Cuba. They must prove that they are temporary residents or risk having their accounts frozen and bank transfers blocked. They are also unable to pay for educational or other services using their United Nations Federal Credit Union accounts.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The Nairobi Maafikiano (TD/519/Add.2 and Corr.1), adopted at the 14th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in July 2016, states that

> States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries, and that affect commercial interests. These actions hinder market access, investments and freedom of transit and the well-being of the populations of affected countries. Meaningful trade liberalization will also require addressing non-tariff measures including, inter alia, unilateral measures, where they may act as unnecessary trade barriers.

Cuba has been under the United States economic embargo since 1962. On 16 June 2017, the President of the United States signed the National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba. The directive established a new policy, which, inter alia, sought to tighten the embargo against Cuba. The United States President also repealed the Presidential Policy Directive entitled "United States-Cuba Normalization", issued by the former President on 14 October 2016, which recognized the embargo as an outdated policy that should be lifted. The embargo against Cuba thus remains in force and operational as at 2018.

Bilateral trade between Cuba and the United States

Estimates by UNCTAD suggest that, currently, bilateral trade between Cuba and the United States is relatively small, particularly given the size of their respective economies, as well as the economic complementarities and geographical proximity of the two nations.[5] In 2016, the United States market remained virtually closed to Cuban products as most imports from Cuba and other Cuban-origin goods are prohibited, with some limited exceptions.[6] Cuban exports to the United States were insignificant, valued at just $1 million, or 0.04 per cent of Cuba's total exports to the world.

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[5] The source for all data referred to in the text is UNCTADstat, unless otherwise specified.

[6] Import of Cuban-origin information and information materials (e.g. publications, films) is exempt from prohibition. United States Department of State, United States Relations with Cuba: Fact Sheet, 8 November 2017.

By contrast, there exists far greater and sizable trade in the opposite direction. In 2016, Cuba imported products from the United States that were worth $427 million, or 4 per cent of its total imports from the world. These products mainly consisted of basic food items, such as "meat and meat preparations", and "cereals and cereal preparations", including edible meat (e.g., poultry), wheat and maize. This reflects the fact that United States commercial agricultural exports have been authorized since 2001, albeit subject to numerous restrictions and licensing requirements. The United States has indeed become one of Cuba's primary suppliers of food and agricultural products. Commercial exports of medicines and medical products have also been authorized since the early 1990s.[7]

Overall economic and trade trends

Trade plays an essential role in the Cuban economy. As a small island short on natural resources, endogenous capital and a small domestic market, the country needs access to international markets to build up a vibrant productive base and generate foreign exchange earnings; and access to a larger quantity and variety of goods and services, as well as foreign capital, technology and investment, to fulfil the domestic needs of its population and industries, fuel its economy and sustain its economic growth.

In 2016, exports of goods and services accounted for 23 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Cuba and imports accounted for 19 per cent, which represented a significant increase from 2000 when exports and imports made up 14 per cent and 17 per cent of GDP, respectively. During this period, the country's per capita income rose from $2,741 to $7,815. In 2017, the country was ranked 68th in the United Nations Development Programme human development index and qualified as a country with high human development. Nevertheless, the relative importance of trade in GDP, a proxy of countries' degree of trade integration, is less pronounced in Cuba than in other Caribbean economies. For an average Caribbean economy, trade-to-GDP ratio reached 30 per cent for exports and 33 per cent for imports in 2016. Hence, Cuba is yet to exploit the full potential of trade to leverage growth and development.

The overall economic conditions facing Cuba today, however, do not seem to be amenable to dynamic trade growth in the immediate future. After expanding by 4.4 per cent in 2015, the Cuban economy contracted by nearly 1 per cent (0.9 per cent) in 2016.[8] The downturn may be attributable to reduced export earnings, reduced bilateral support and oil supply from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the wake of its economic hardships and resulting austerity measures. It is estimated that the economy grew by 0.5 per cent in 2017, and would grow at the same pace in 2018. However, significant damage caused by Hurricane Irma in September 2017 to tourism, agriculture and infrastructure could further weaken growth prospects.

The Cuban economy suffered from weak growth in the recent past. Between 2011–2016, the Cuban economy registered an average annual growth rate of 2.2 per cent, lower than the 5 per cent deemed necessary for the country to attain a sustainable growth path.[9] The low rate resulted from chronic stagnation in domestic production and competitiveness affecting productive sectors, including agriculture, energy and industry. As a small island economy with a GDP of $90 billion (2016), Cuba has a small agriculture sector that accounts for 4 per cent of GDP (but employs 13 per cent of workforce) and an industrial sector that makes up 23 per cent of GDP. In contrast, the services sector has become dominant in the economy, contributing 73 per cent to GDP and emerging as the main export industry.

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[7] Mark P. Sullivan, "Cuba: issues and actions in the 115th Congress", Congressional Research Service, 22 November 2017.

[8] United Nations, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018*.

[9] Richard E. Feinberg, "Cuba's economy after Raúl Castro: A tale of three worlds", The Brookings Institution, February 2018.

Partly reflecting the domestic production structure, the country's trade is characterized by a persistent deficit in merchandise trade ($7.7 billion in 2016)[10] and a persistent surplus in services trade ($9.2 billion in 2016). Over the past few years, there has been a decline in the trade surplus, giving rise to balance-of-payments challenges. The surplus has fallen from $3.8 billion in 2012 to $1.5 billion in 2016.

It is particularly notable that Cuban merchandise exports have steadily and substantially declined since 2011, partly reflecting weakening domestic productive capacities and competitiveness. In 2017, the value of Cuban merchandise exports rose to $2.6 billion, bouncing back by 8 per cent from the previous year when output contracted. However, this was below 2006 levels, and less than half the historic high of $6.4 billion attained in 2011. Consequently, the share of Cuba in the world merchandise exports more than halved from 0.035 per cent in 2011 to 0.015 per cent in 2017.

Cuba's export basket includes basic food, beverages and tobacco, ores and metals, chemical products and other machinery and transport equipment. In 2016, sugar (22 per cent), tobacco (17 per cent), medical and pharmaceutical products (13 per cent) and metalliferous ores (10 per cent) figured prominently among the major exports products. Despite their diminished role in the economy over the past two decades, traditional cash crops — sugar and tobacco — remained the main foreign exchange earners. In addition, a biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector that supplies the domestic health-care system has become a significant export industry while nickel mining, through the participation of a Canadian company, has also produced viable export activities.

These exports were destined mainly for the European Union (27 per cent) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (17 per cent), as well as Canada (10 per cent), China (9 per cent) and the Russian Federation (9 per cent). The relative importance of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as an export market declined recently and that of the European Union and the Russian Federation rose. In these markets, Cuban exports faced weighted average tariffs ranging from 1 per cent to 28 per cent.[11]

Estimated at $10.9 billion in 2017, merchandise imports were four times larger than merchandise exports as the country relies heavily on imports for the supply of essential energy and foodstuffs, as well as capital goods. Basic food (21 per cent), including cereals (8 per cent) and meat (3 per cent); fuels (8 per cent); manufacturing including machinery and transport equipment (33 per cent); and other manufactured goods (25 per cent) are indeed the main imported items. Cuba reportedly meets 70 per cent to 80 per cent of domestic food needs from imports. As to energy, since 2000 the country has maintained a preferential oil agreement with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (essentially an oil for medical personnel barter arrangement) that until recently provided the country with a quantity of oil covering two thirds of its domestic consumption.

The main sources of imports were: the European Union (29 per cent), China (22 per cent), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (10 per cent), Canada (5 per cent) and Brazil (4 per cent). It is notable that the United States is ranked sixth on account of its food exports as noted above. The relative importance of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela declined lately favour of China.

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[10] As reported in the balance of payments, balance of payment-based statistics of trade in goods may differ from international merchandise trade statistics reported elsewhere in the text owing to differences in the concepts and definitions.

[11] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development TRAINS database, accessed through WITS.

Cuba has developed important export capabilities in the services sector over the past two decades. In 2016, Cuba's services exports stood at $11.2 billion, and imports, at $42.1 billion, generating a trade surplus of $9.2 billion as noted. Key sector activities generating foreign exchange are the export of professional services, largely medical personnel supplying services in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and booming tourism services. Tourism has grown significantly since the mid-1990s and an estimated 4.7 million tourists visited the country in 2017 with a corresponding increase in tourism revenues. In 2016, related travel services generated $3 billion in exports, accounting for 27 per cent of total services exports.

On the other hand, remittance flows to Cuba sent by migrants and workers abroad amounted to some $3.5 billion in 2016, $3 billion of which was estimated to originate in the United States. The amount was greater than the country's total merchandise export receipt and equivalent to 4 per cent of its GDP. Remittances have been the major source of external finances and could potentially serve as investment capital for households and private enterprises.

Further development of these promising activities, however, has been constrained by the embargo as travel to Cuba for tourist activities remains prohibited in the United States. The United States regulations currently restrict travel to Cuba to licensed travellers engaged in certain specified activities. The United States embargo also restricts financial transactions affecting Cuba with extraterritorial effects and compromised efficient remittances flows and increased remittance costs.

Conclusion

Recent actions taken by the United States have affected the efforts to ease the embargo and normalize bilateral diplomatic relations. The essential elements of the embargo remain in force and continue to restrict a healthy development of commercial relations between the two neighbouring countries. This continues to be a matter of concern to Cuba as trade plays a crucial role in its economy. To date, the embargo has frustrated the country's efforts to use trade as an instrument of sustainable development, including through further expansion of promising tourism and professional services activities, as well as productive use of remittances. This is all the more significant in the light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals which profile international trade as an essential means of implementation and calls for significantly increasing the exports of developing countries under its target 17.11.

United Nations Development Programme

[Original: English]
[11 June 2018]

Cuba continues to maintain a high human development index ranking. President Miguel Díaz-Canel has ratified Cuba's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Cuban development model continues to change. The document "Social and economic policy guidelines" was approved in April 2011 and updated at the Seventh Communist Party Congress, held in April 2016. The document continues to provide guidance for ongoing reform. The Cuban Parliament also approved the conceptualization of the Cuban economic and social model and the 2030 national plan for economic and social development. The plan defines the key strategic priorities for: an effective and socialist government and social integration; changes in the production sector and participation in international trade; infrastructure development; the development of human potential, science, technology and innovation; natural resources and the environment; as well as human development, equity and justice.

The social and economic guidelines are innovative within the national context and represent a challenge for the country. The main objective of the guidelines is to stimulate foreign investment and accelerate economic growth and competitiveness, recognizing that local governments have a vital role in the forthcoming decentralization framework. In late 2013, Cuba initiated a process of monetary unification which represents a key challenge for the country. The complex process is ongoing, and requires rigorous preparations to address the possible impacts it may have on the population. In this context, universal social services and social development remain a priority for the Government. The traditional social protection network is thus being adjusted to ensure sustainability and greater focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as the elderly.

Guideline No. 85 of the social and economic guidelines calls for the promotion of multilateral collaboration to support the 2030 national plan for economic and social development, with direct reference to the United Nations system. In that regard, the United Nations system supports national authorities in addressing emerging issues and challenges.

The Seventh Communist Party Congress also approved a document that establishes a plan of action in response to climate change and to promote resilient development.

The United Nations Development Programme supports national authorities' efforts to address emerging development issues and challenges. The partnership between UNDP and Cuban authorities is based on a long-standing relationship. UNDP has supported major local and national development strategies and policies for over 40 years. At present, cooperation is carried out within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2014–2018 and the UNDP country programme document (2014–2018); these documents are in the process of being extended to 2019. UNDP cooperates with national authorities in the following areas: supporting local governments and their development strategies, including those related to value chains; introducing and applying measures for adaptation to climate change, especially in food production; using renewable energy; supporting national policy and productive sectors to reduce levels of imports; contributing to sustainable development by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources through knowledge and technology transfer to productive sector policies, and a more effective disaster risk reduction strategy; and supporting the national response to HIV/AIDS and combating discrimination based on sexual identity. Gender and youth are cross-cutting themes.

The United Nations Development Programme supports priority areas of cooperation that contribute to the implementation of the social and economic policy guidelines in areas that are at times innovative within the national context and have a high strategic relevance in view of the changes to the Cuban development model. Fostering sustainable human development will continue to be at the heart of the cooperation programme, which promotes South-South cooperation, innovation and technology and knowledge transfer.

Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States

In December 2014 the Presidents of Cuba and the United States of America, Raúl Castro and Barack Obama, announced the decision to initiate conversations, focusing on steps to be taken to officially re-establish diplomatic relations. After several rounds of negotiations, the embassies of Cuba and the United States were opened in Washington, D.C., and Havana, respectively, in the summer of 2015. A bilateral commission was established to help move towards the full normalization of diplomatic ties. However, the current United States administration has adopted measures that have negatively affected bilateral relations including the suspension of consular services in the United States embassy in Havana for Cuban citizens who wish to travel to the United States and the reduction of United States diplomatic personnel in the country.

Specific effects of the United States embargo

In this context, the embargo remains in place, and its negative impact continues to be very similar to that of previous years, particularly on commerce and on financial activities. The embargo affects the external economic relations of Cuba, and its impact can be observed in all spheres of the country's social and economic activities; the embargo maintains the restrictions on the use of the United States dollar and on imports from Cuba. It affects opportunities for national and local development and creates economic hardship for the population. The embargo has an impact on the population's most vulnerable groups and on human development in general.

According to official estimates, the cumulative direct and indirect losses to the Cuban economy due to the embargo from the early 1960s until April 2017 amount to $130.2 billion at current prices.

The embargo has limited Cuba's access to development credits granted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. This has narrowed the possibility of obtaining resources to provide financial support for Cuba's national and/or local development plans.

In the context of updating the Cuban economic model, the embargo also limits the participation of foreign investors, particularly United States companies, in prioritized economic projects, including the special development zone in Mariel. In that regard, the embargo impedes investment flows and limits access to regional and global value chains.

Travel by Cuban experts and researchers to the United States in the framework of cooperation agreements has been limited by the process of obtaining visas.

The embargo has continued to negatively affect day-to-day work in external cooperation initiatives, creating many difficulties for the implementation of programmes and projects owing to trade restrictions or prohibitions on purchasing inputs from United States companies and subsidiaries established in the United States or in other countries. It also reduces the number of possible suppliers and limits competitive processes.

At a financial level, the embargo continues to prevent the UNDP country office from making transfers in United States dollars. For this reason and although budgets of all projects are recorded in dollars, transfers abroad are made in another currency (mainly Canadian dollars, British pounds, euros, Japanese yen and Swiss francs). However, even when payments are made in one of these currencies, bank withholdings have significantly increased as a result of requests for additional information by banks in order to comply with the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Treasury (OFAC) all along the banking chain system (issuing, intermediate and beneficiary). This measure has affected the ability of the country office to honour payments to suppliers within the agreed timeframes.

In addition, despite the measures on port security, the embargo places practical restrictions on shipping lines whose vessels dock in Cuban harbours. This significantly reduces the number of shipping companies that include Cuba in their routes, limiting the availability of transportation and delaying the loading of goods.

Costs associated with intermediaries and long-distance transportation have had a negative impact on the ability to access key inputs and on the final cost of imported project goods and equipment. Likewise, products for development projects must be purchased and imported from more distant places, at much higher costs.

Effects on projects

The embargo has had a direct impact on all UNDP development projects and emergency activities, both because it increases the transaction costs of obtaining project inputs and because it increases the cost of transporting the imported goods. Finding alternative shipping companies requires additional time and effort. As a result, projects have been affected by significant delays in the purchase and distribution of project inputs, which has had a negative impact on the timely implementation of project activities and results.

The situation has been particularly worrisome in the case of projects related to food security and local development, given the lengthy process to access and import agricultural inputs such as irrigation systems, machinery and agricultural tools. In general, procurement processes take longer, delaying project activities and their results. Therefore, financial proposals and new projects must consider, in their designs, an extended period for procurement processes and they also must allocate additional financial resources to cover incremental costs, that could otherwise be allocated for development activities. Those additional costs are covered by the funds provided by international development partners, which are channelled through UNDP.

For example, in an ongoing development project that aims to implement measures to adapt to climate change in food production, a gasification plant that uses rice husks was contracted. The technology was received by the beneficiaries of the project. However, as of today, it has not been possible to realize the bank transfer to the supplier. According to the supplier Ankur Scientific Energy Technologies, the State Bank of India has refused to receive the funds because the transaction is related to a project implemented in Cuba. In this context, it has been impossible to fulfil the payment to the supplier and the implementation of the project has been delayed.

Many of the assets required by the country office projects involve United States technologies or have United States manufacturing components. The Torricelli Act of 1992 and Helms-Burton Act of 1996 are still in force, both of which explicitly prohibit sales to Cuba by United States companies and subsidiaries in third countries and include sanctions against those who violate the prohibition.

The situation also affects the acquisition of computer technology. After the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States in 2015, an information and communications technology provider, Planson International, stated its interest in participating in bidding processes through competitive procedures and when the provider was finally awarded a purchase order in early 2017, it faced delays in obtaining export licenses to Cuba. This was the first purchase order placed with this provider and was an important advance in the enrichment of the information and communications technology provider portfolio of the UNDP Cuba country office. The contract was signed on 7 March 2017 and, on 28 March, the vendor announced that the delivery would be delayed by licensing issues in relation to the United States Department of Commerce (Bureau of Industry and Security). On 30 March, the vendor sent a communication expressing its regrets and informing UNDP that it could not confirm whether it would be able to obtain the licences on time. In view of the risk of breach of contract with the consequent loss of funds, the purchase order was cancelled. The vendor has still not been able to obtain the licence.

The projects financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), of which UNDP is the principal recipient, provide medicines, reagents and laboratory equipment that benefit of 21,758 people of all ages living with HIV/AIDS. The provisions are purchased from third countries and from secondary suppliers at prices significantly higher than those of comparable products sold on the international market. Even when long-term corporate UNDP agreements with international suppliers apply to the project in Cuba, the embargo hinders purchases of products that are manufactured or have a component manufactured in the United States. In such cases, the providers have to obtain a licence from Office of Foreign Assets Control to deliver services or products to projects in Cuba, a bureaucratic process that takes time and effort.

In August 2016, the Global Fund approved the purchase of three GeneXpert Systems, recommended by the World Health Organization for the rapid diagnosis of several diseases. This equipment is especially useful for the care of people living with HIV/AIDS and people at risk of contracting tuberculosis, as well as for facilitating multi-resistance studies for HIV. The Cepheid company is the only supplier authorized by the Global Fund for this equipment. The supplier could not sell the equipment until the Office of Foreign Assets Control licence was issued more than one year later, on 5 October 2017, which markedly delayed the start of activities, scheduled for the first quarter of 2017.

In addition, during 2017, financial transfers related to payments to suppliers of goods were returned by Multibank, Panama (the suppliers' bank) due to the financial sanctions that would be imposed on the bank if it performed these operations. This has caused delays in complying with the agreed payment schedules and the execution of additional financial operations, since UNDP had to carry out the new financial transactions through other banks.

Fully functional Internet access in Cuba is affected by the embargo. This has limited the effective use of virtual platforms and social networks currently available in favour of public-good campaigns aimed at key populations at higher risk of HIV, to promote responsible sexuality, sexual-health and reproductive services, self-esteem, self-care and gender non-violence.

Effects of the embargo on country operations of the United Nations Development Programme

The embargo also affects the day-to-day work of the UNDP office in Cuba, placing it at a disadvantage compared with other country offices. There are limits to the benefits that can be gained from corporate long-term agreements to effectively implement and monitor development and emergency activities. For example, although there is a long-term agreement signed with Toyota Gibraltar, to date, the company cannot supply spare parts originating in the United States. This situation increases transaction costs by at least 15 per cent owing to the participation of intermediaries and higher costs for alternative information and communications technology equipment and services as well as access to software licences. In 2018, Toyota Gibraltar announced the cancellation of the supply of vehicles to the UNDP country office in Cuba, as there is no company offering post-sale service in the country. This situation places the office and its projects in a challenging situation regarding the renovation of the vehicle fleet and the purchase of new vehicles. The office will have to use intermediary suppliers, with the consequent increase in prices.

Access to Internet services is limited because of the embargo, thus restraining the effective use of corporate platforms and increasing the amount of time required to perform online processes and activities.

In information and communications technologies the embargo prevents the UNDP office from directly accessing technical support for products and services from the United States such as CISCO, Dell and Hewlett Packard. The same applies to software licences. For example, Hewlett Packard holds a long-term contract with UNDP, but it cannot be used by UNDP Cuba, due to the embargo regulations. The same applies to authorized distributors.

The UNDP country office in Cuba is also affected by not being able to use corporate accounts with United States banks or use the United States dollar as a currency of payment. The office must take additional administrative measures to carry out programme-related financial operations; for example, it has to use third-country banks, which results in higher costs for the office and its projects and a heavier administrative burden. The related increase in costs have been covered by UNDP and project funds from donors, therefore using resources that could otherwise have been used for development activities.

Another way in which UNDP is affected by the embargo is that national staff required to travel to UNDP headquarters in New York have to request their visas far in advance.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba for almost 60 years continues to cause suffering to the Cuban people and to obstruct the country's economic development.

The embargo affects the ability to ensure continued and increasing quality, universal and free education at all levels in Cuba. Commercial restrictions prevent the purchase of school supplies and teaching materials from United States companies which, given the proximity of both countries, would be much more economical for Cuba.

Specifically, in higher education, the implementation of the embargo has posed obstacles that hinder Cuba's access to technology and the equipment needed for advanced learning and scientific research. This includes research materials, the proper dissemination and remuneration for results, the purchase of supplies, resources and instruments, as well as support for university extension programmes in communities, which foster local development.

The culture sector is also affected by the enforcement of the embargo as it limits the proper promotion, dissemination and marketing of Cuba's artistic talent. It also significantly reduces the value of the sales prices of cultural products and services.

The following cases illustrate this:

- There is a proven market for Cuban music in the United States, but due to the embargo, Cuban musicians promoted by Cuban artistic agencies are unable to access this market and are forced to sell their music in markets with a lower demand.
- The imposition of fines on bank transactions with Cuba prevents direct transactions with the United States regarding the sale of cultural goods and services, especially in the music field.
- The Cuban music industry is also affected, and limited, owing to the obstacles imposed in accessing materials for recording, as well as access to state-of-the-art technology, which has since become standard in the industry.

- The United States Government refused to grant visas to the Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba company and to the Ludi Teatro group, both of which had professional commitments in the United States in October and November 2017.
- The education and training of Cuban musicians is hindered, as specialists from different areas do not have access to world-renowned training, such as is offered at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts.

The embargo imposes considerable difficulties on the purchase of up-to-date scientific materials, resources for historical conservation and state-of-the-art technological equipment, such as optic fibre and software licences, as well as other merchandise and supplies from the United States or elsewhere, if they are under the protection of United States patents.

Likewise, access to Internet services is still limited because of the embargo, which inhibits the efficient use of institutional platforms and slows online processes and activities.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regional office in Latin America and the Caribbean continues to adopt additional administrative measures to carry out financial operations for its programmes, deal with raising administrative costs and resorting to banks located in third-party countries, thereby increasing the administrative burden. This has caused, in some cases, delays in financial transactions with institutions or providers of Cuban services because they have been considered "prohibited transactions", by virtue of the Office of Foreign Assets Control Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List or another of its lists of sanctions or affected countries, with the associated subsequent backlog.

The embargo continues to obstruct financial transactions conducted by UNESCO international and national personnel, as well as banking and insurance services received by said personnel. Local officials find it difficult to use United States-based services, such as transfers to internal bank accounts or between bank accounts. In addition, international personnel with local credit cards or bank accounts generally have difficulties in making payments abroad. This is particularly relevant since work missions that require international trips cannot use Cuban bank accounts to make reservations or pay for plane tickets, hotel accommodations and other services.

In the case of medical insurance, UNESCO officials are directly affected, since many health insurance companies cannot work directly with local health service providers given the restrictions imposed by the embargo, making it difficult to ensure their health services.

United Nations Environment Programme

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

The embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba not only affects that country but also the Caribbean subregion and the United States itself.

Conservation efforts in the Caribbean islands hotspots are fragmented and incomplete and they lack a necessary common strategy, since Cuba is excluded from several of the most important projects in the subregion, owing to the fact that the projects are being implemented with United States funds. This not only prevents Cuba from benefiting from the projects, but it affects the Caribbean subregion, as it cannot be approached as a whole.

The embargo also significantly affects the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems shared between Cuba and the United States. It eliminates the possibility of implementation of common strategies for the integrated management of the environment and the natural resources that surround these two countries and no important integrated progress can be made with the absence of agreements and dialogue between the two Governments to focus on their shared environments.

Much of the work of the United Nations Environment Programme is also carried out through South-South cooperation, which involves knowledge transfer, capacity-building and technical support from and to Cuba and other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, by way of training events, capacity-building activities and workshops, among others. Therefore, the continuing embargo translates into missed opportunities for environmental cooperation in the region.

When working in Cuba, there is often a need to search for alternatives in the use of technology, for example, the global information system software used for remotely sensed and spatial data gathering and processing, which is needed for certain activities and projects. Given the existing trade restrictions, common suppliers are unable to deliver products and services in Cuba, therefore the alternatives in terms of other capable software are limited.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba also affects the operations of the United Nations. Simple things, such as Cuba making its financial contribution to the Programme, are affected, as banks often block transfers and transactions from funds coming from the country. Cuba's financial contribution is important to support the implementation of the programme of work.

A concrete example of the embargo's effects is a global environment facility project in Cuba, which is ready to begin a number of initiatives, but faces challenges with the transfer of funds to Cuba. The transfer must be done through the United Nations Development Programme, which, in turn, entails additional expenses. Funds that would otherwise be invested in the project are used to pay those expenses. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme has stated that owing to those difficulties, no procurement will be made for the project. This creates problems for the general implementation of the project.

Other examples of the impacts of the embargo are:

(a) United States companies are not allowed to sell equipment, technology or products, among others, to Cuban companies, so Cuba is forced to buy them in other markets, increasing cargo travel times and subsequently increasing carbon emissions associated with transport;

(b) Cuba continues to increase energy efficiency, under its energy revolution programme, as well as to promote recycling and other green technologies. The aim is to decrease oil consumption and carbon dioxide emissions and to achieve general resource efficiency. However, United States companies, or their subsidiaries in other countries, cannot sell technologies that could benefit from such endeavours. The same is true of products of non-United States companies that contain parts or components provided by Unites States companies or subsidiaries that could assist in advancing such developments;

(c) Cuba will face difficulties in meeting the obligations derived from the Minamata Convention on Mercury as a consequence of limited access to mercury-free technology and the difficulty in phasing out products containing mercury, such as dental amalgams; leading to uncontrolled mercury releases that have regional and global effects;

(d) The participation of Cuban experts in environmental and sustainable development conferences and training activities is often constrained by travel restrictions and thousands of dollars are spent on more expensive and often longer routes for travel; in addition to this, their daily subsistence allowance cannot be provided through bank transfers because of the financial restrictions. Similarly, the challenges in processing the financial transactions and Internet connections make it difficult for UNEP staff members to participate in missions to Cuba;

(e) The embargo on Cuba also restricts the country's access to information from leading scientific and technical journals and publications, as well as Internet access to specialized companies and institutions in the United States. This limits access by Cuban academics, engineers and students to cutting-edge developments in energy and environmental sciences; such access could increase their capacities of implementation of sound environmental technologies. Connectivity restrictions also limit Cuba's ability to implement and comply with certain environmental treaties that require the constant use of the Internet;

(f) Cuba also has limited bandwidth as a result of the embargo, which affects the participation of Cubans in Internet-based conference sites and in webinar platforms to attend virtual meetings and training sessions, increasingly being implemented to decrease travel costs, among others;

(g) The United States and Cuba are located in a region where disasters, particularly hurricanes, are seriously affecting ecosystems and populations. Both countries are working to attain higher levels of prevention of and preparation for disasters. In this sense, cooperation would benefit both countries, as well as countries of the wider Caribbean area.

Especially at this point in time, when Member States around the world have adopted important global agreements, such as the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is imperative to facilitate cooperation among countries and remove barriers. The total elimination of the obstacles that limit the normal exchange between Cuba and the United States would contribute to advancement in the sustainable management of shared ecosystems, cooperation among scientific and academic communities and in the increased contribution of both countries in the fight against climate change, in ecosystem management, in facing natural disasters and the prevention of accidents. It would also benefit countries with which the United States and Cuba have cooperative programmes.

Notwithstanding the difficulties posed by the embargo, the United Nations Environment Programme supports Cuba within its possibilities, trying to offset the limitations posed by the embargo. However, ending the embargo would significantly facilitate the implementation of projects and programmes in Cuba.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

[Original: English]
[17 May 2018]

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has been working in Cuba since 2001 and there has been an UN-Habitat Office in Cuba since 2005. The main objective of its presence is to accompany the Government of Cuba in the implementation of its urban development agenda and priorities in line with the mandate of the Programme.

During these past 13 years, UN-Habitat has supported Cuba in the implementation of several projects based on priorities reflected in the United Nations

Development Assistance Framework and the UN-Habitat country programme. Among these projects are those related to planning and urban management at the national and municipal levels; housing and urban recovery after the impact of hurricanes; supporting changes in the sector of housing and habitat; and promoting the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national and local levels.

The implementation of those development-oriented projects has been somewhat limited as a result of the international implications of the political, economic and commercial embargo, which restricts financial transactions and access to international markets that are of great importance for the acquisition of supplies, equipment, technologies and infrastructure for the urban and territorial development of Cuba and gradual improvement of the quality of life of the Cuban people.

Currently, with the new scenario of Cuba-United States relations and the different measures that have been approved and put into practice by both countries, the necessity to end the economic and commercial embargo becomes more obvious, as new opportunities are affected by this phenomenon.

From the perspective of UN-Habitat, the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/4 will enable Cuba to contribute decisively to the achievement of the New Urban Agenda and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 11 to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

[Original: English]
[17 April 2018]

Currently, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is supporting the efforts of the Cuban Government to promote foreign direct investment and create strategic alliances conducive to strengthening the country's industrial capabilities and competitiveness in priority industrial sectors through the implementation of a country programme.

The country programme focuses on three main objectives: (a) improving the business environment and sustainability; (b) improving industrial competitiveness; and (c) attracting foreign investment. The country programme includes various projects in strategic sectors for Cuba's economic and social development, such as industrial policy, the use of renewable energies, fresh-food industry and the integrated management of hydraulic resources, among others.

An overall budget of €50 million for four years has been tentatively identified, to be mobilized for the implementation of the programme. But owing to the restrictions in fund mobilization and partnership constraints caused by the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, UNIDO has not been able to make the expected and needed progress with the country programme.

Nonetheless, UNIDO is implementing three ongoing projects with an overall budget of $4.8 million, and three new initiatives are in the advanced stages of funding negotiation for $12 million for three years.

Even with the negative impact of the embargo, UNIDO furthered promising business opportunities between Cuba and Germany with the organization of business meetings between May 2017 and April 2018 for the renewable energy sector.

UNIDO is convinced that without the restrictions caused by the embargo, the interregional effort to promote foreign direct investment, one of the key elements of

Programme for Country Partnership approach of UNIDO, could have brought more benefits.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

Following the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Government of Cuba has actively engaged in important international and regional cooperation initiatives, such as the Regional and Global Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2017, where Cuba's participation offered experiences, best practices and lessons learned in early warning systems, seismic preparation and other community-based disaster risk reduction methodologies as valuable examples of advances in the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

In late 2017, like other countries and territories in the Caribbean, Cuba faced the effects of Hurricane Irma which affected the northern part of the country, with consequences for the population of the national territory. Although attention to the affected populations and recovery was prompt in the re-establishment of basic services such as water supply, health, education and sanitation services, as well as the work to promote the recovery of housing and food production, the country faced severe damages in key sectors of the economy, such as tourism, industry, electrical generation and roads, thus highlighting the need for furthering cooperation for risk-informed investment and building resilient infrastructure.

Despite the effects of the hurricanes in 2017, Cuba has actively continued its contribution to advancing disaster risk management in the Caribbean region, by promoting regional and active exchanges of good practices among the four subregions of the Greater Caribbean on reducing vulnerability to disasters. The lessons learned and best practices of the 2017 hurricane season in community-based early warning, public education and effective established evacuation plans and safe shelters to protect its people continue to be a substantive contribution in the Caribbean and in the region in general.

While acknowledging Cuba's considerable progress in managing disaster risk, the impact of the past hurricane season calls for further advances in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, in particular in reference to the enhancement of the economic resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets. Advancing in these areas will require stronger linkages and access to technical advances, resources and expertise on multi-hazard risk modelling, disaster risk information systems and linkages to scientific and technical networks, including resources from donors and international finance institutions, all critical elements to build risk knowledge capacities, reduce economic losses and reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) notes that the Caribbean region continues to be confronted with serious challenges related to the illicit production and trafficking of cocaine originating in Latin America. UNODC is further strengthening its presence in the Caribbean to support member States in their efforts to counter these challenges, and expects to strengthen its cooperation with

Cuba in the context of initiatives for the region, including new initiatives to enhance border controls.

Cuba is covered by the UNODC Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean in Panama, which began its activities in September 2009. In April 2014, UNODC launched the Regional Programme 2014–2016 (recently extended through 2018) in support of the Crime and Security Strategy of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Although Cuba is not a member of CARICOM, it benefits from the Regional Programme, particularly through synergies with the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, of which Cuba is a member. The Programme consists of five subprogrammes, which not only reflect the range of thematic areas covered by the UNODC mandate, but also directly target the strategic goals of the CARICOM crime and security strategy.

In the context of the regional programme, UNODC re-established a presence in the Caribbean, in Barbados, in August 2015. UNODC is expected to support Cuba as part of the stronger presence of UNODC in the region, in close coordination with important regional and national counterparts.

Cuba has effectively cooperated with UNODC and this contribution has been always positively assessed by both parties. Cuba is a State party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and has participated in an active and efficient manner in its review process (Cuba has been the reviewer of Guyana, Nicaragua and Saint Lucia and has used its right to request the publication of its final country report on the homepage of UNODC).

Following Cuba's expression of interest in joining the Global Container Control Programme of UNODC and the World Customs Organization, an initial technical mission took place from 30 May to 3 June 2016 to assess the existing capabilities and discuss the details of Cuba becoming a member of the Programme. As a result of the mission, it was agreed that container control programme for sea would be implemented in the port of Mariel, while the container control programme for airports would be implemented at the José Martí International Airport. On 7 June 2017, Cuban authorities and UNODC signed the memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the container control programme in the country. A number of training and mentoring events followed the signing of the document, leading to the first seizure by the container control programme Joint Port Control Units in Cuba: a case of undeclared goods.

In the implementation of its initial activities in Cuba, UNODC has been facing some communication-related challenges, especially with regard to the quality and cost of Internet services. Nevertheless, UNODC has continued to collaborate with Cuban authorities, including in the development of the national strategy against trafficking in persons, which allowed the UNODC to suggest elements for inclusion in the strategy. Cuban officials have also participated in the meetings of the regional law enforcement network on wildlife crime organized by UNODC in the Caribbean in 2016 and 2017. Cooperation was also established in the context of the fight against trafficking of firearms and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2017, Cuban civil servants participated in a regional meeting on the monitoring of flows of trafficked firearms held in Panama, which set the basis for increased sharing of information and best practices at the continental level, as well as for the alignment of efforts to achieve target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

For UNODC it is essential to continue promoting resource mobilization to include Cuba in the implementation of UNODC activities in the Caribbean. In this context, the regional office for Central America and the Caribbean is making every effort to include Cuba as a beneficiary/partner in new initiatives to be presented to donors for funding, including, for instance, the airport communication project. An end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo would presumably facilitate the future operational engagement of UNODC in the country, in close partnership with the Cuban authorities.

United Nations Population Fund

[Original: English]
[7 June 2018]

Despite the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba, the main measures of the commercial, economic and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba continue to be in effect. The embargo continues to affect the economic, social and cultural development of the Cuban people, particularly, the quality of life of the most vulnerable groups.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continues to face difficulties in implementing its country programme, in particular as regards the acquisition and purchase of commodities, equipment, medicines and laboratory materials produced in the United States or covered by United States patents. The commodities linked to sexual and reproductive health assistance and related materials need to be purchased in other regions, usually resulting in an increase in costs for transportation and freight charges.

Difficulties in the procurement of necessary items on the local market continue to negatively affect the implementation of the UNFPA programme.

The United Nations Population Fund is one of the few organizations that support sexual and reproductive health, population and development, and gender programmes in Cuba. UNFPA continues with efforts to strengthen networks with political, academic and social actors in support of the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development. UNFPA continues to support Cuba's efforts to maintain progress in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, sexuality education programming, maternal health and access to family planning methods, which was achieved under the economic embargo and through domestic resource mobilization.

Universal Postal Union

[Original: English]
[25 May 2018]

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has always regarded Cuba as a full-fledged member of the organization, as such, Cuba enjoys the same rights and obligations as any other UPU member country.

Cuba currently serves as a member of both the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council of the UPU, following the elections that took place on 5 and 6 October 2016, respectively, during the twenty-sixth Universal Postal Congress held in Istanbul, Turkey.

Moreover, Cuba regularly benefits from postal development assistance provided within the framework of UPU technical cooperation activities. In terms of any relevant developments since June 2017, the following activities may be highlighted:

- Cuba recently participated in two workshops concerning the UPU Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) initiative, which took place in September 2017 and March 2018 in Montevideo;
- Another ORE-related field activity (on-site process review) is scheduled to take place in June 2018 in Havana.

In this context, UPU has not encountered difficulties in implementing the aforementioned assistance or in undertaking any other joint activities with Cuba as a result of the embargo imposed by the United States of America against the country.

World Food Programme

[Original: English]
[1 June 2018]

Over the past 50 years, Cuba's comprehensive social protection programmes have largely eradicated hunger and poverty. Cuba was one of the most successful countries in implementing the Millennium Development Goals and is ranked sixty-eighth on the human development index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

During the 1990s, Cuba faced a severe economic crisis which had a lasting effect on food security and nutrition. The 2008 global financial crisis, frequent natural disasters, including the drought spells currently affecting the country, high global food prices, limited access to credit, low productivity and the embargo by United States of America have further exacerbated the food security situation in the country.

In 2011, the Government of Cuba launched a process to improve the efficiency, reduce the costs and increase the sustainability of social protection programmes. Those efforts are guided by the Government's commitment to ensure that no Cuban is left unprotected. Under the process, food security was identified as a national priority, with an emphasis on food-related social protection systems, the decentralization of the decision-making process regarding food resources, the adoption of a new management model for agriculture, reinforcing value chains and reducing food imports.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has been working in Cuba since 1963 to support the Government's efforts to promote food security and nutrition. In 2015, the agency launched its first four-year country programme for Cuba.

The World Food Programme works in the five eastern provinces (Granma, Guantánamo, Holguín, Las Tunas and Santiago de Cuba), which have the lowest development rates and are prone to drought, torrential rains and occasional earthquakes. In addition, WFP works in the provinces of Pinar del Río and Matanzas in western Cuba, which are exposed to tropical cyclones that severely affect food security and nutrition. WFP activities are aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Cuba 2014–2019, which defines food and nutritional security as one of the four pillars of United Nations cooperation in Cuba. The current programme of work in Cuba focuses on capacity-building and augmentation using focused transfers to meet critical food and nutrition needs and to strengthen the overall food-related safety nets in Cuba. The programme supports national and local authorities in shifting to more sustainable and targeted social protection systems. This is achieved through five main activities:

(a) Providing food assistance to vulnerable people benefiting from food-based social protection programmes and technical assistance and training of experts and decision makers engaged in these programmes;

(b) Providing unconditional food assistance to shock-affected populations from pre-positioned food stocks to ensure a swift delivery;

(c) Providing specialized nutritious foods to vulnerable people and technical assistance and training to experts and decision makers of national and local institutions engaged in nutrition programmes;

(d) Providing training, equipment and technical support to smallholder farmers, traders and other stakeholders in food value chains;

(e) Providing training and technical assistance to decision makers and smallholder farmers to improve local risk-reduction management.

Effects of the United States embargo

Throughout 2017, the United States embargo continued to have a negative impact on the Cuban economy as well as on the operational conditions of WFP. High costs of importing agricultural equipment or inputs are a limiting factor for agriculture productivity in Cuba, affecting the country's ability to produce all its food requirements. As a result, the Government needs to import a significant proportion of food commodities to meet the requirement of its national food-based social safety nets programmes. This represents a significant budgetary burden for the country, threatens those most dependent on social safety nets and poses challenges to food security in Cuba.

The ability of WFP to procure services and products from United States-based companies or companies that process payments through United States subsidiaries is also affected by the embargo, directly affecting projects and the ongoing running of the office of WFP.

The procurement and shipment of food and non-food commodities, including fortified food provided by WFP, are also delayed owing to the above-mentioned logistical challenges. Because of the embargo, vessels are obliged to make a stopover in a neighbouring country for trans-shipment, causing delays and additional costs that also affect WFP shipments. This was the case during the WFP response to Hurricane Irma which made landfall in Cuba in September 2017.

The ongoing work of WFP in Cuba is also affected by difficulties in purchasing equipment at more competitive prices, given that suppliers both in the region and elsewhere are often prevented from selling directly to Cuba. This applies to project equipment, office equipment, the purchase of information technology equipment, spare parts for cars, office stationery and other specialized technical equipment for projects increasing regular costs for WFP. Moreover, voice and data communications are extremely expensive as they have to bypass United States telecommunications infrastructure.

Banking transactions are also restricted by the limitations that the embargo imposes on financial institutions dealing with Cuba. This can affect the payment of staff entitlements, as well as their personal financial activities. The country office's payments, though processed through UNDP, are also vulnerable to these limitations.

World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization

[Original: English]
[4 June 2018]

It is important to note that on 16 June 2017 the President of the United States signed a National Security Presidential Memorandum entitled "Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba", which superseded the 2016 Presidential Policy Directive entitled "United States-Cuba Normalization". In 2017, based on alleged sonic attacks directed at United States diplomats and their family members in Cuba, the State Department decided to considerably reduce its diplomatic staff in Havana. A warning was issued to American travellers, discouraging them from visiting Cuba and visits of official delegations from the United States to Cuba were banned. For this reason, the participation of United States experts at events held in

Cuba was significantly reduced, and several meetings and technical events were cancelled or postponed.

Impact on the population, the health sector and the health of individuals

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States continues to jeopardize the right to health of the Cuban people and hinders the work of the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO) in the facilitation of exchanges among member States to improve the health of their citizens. Examples of this situation include the obstacles keeping United States scientists from visiting and collaborating with Cuba and those preventing Cuban scientists from sharing research and experiences with their peers in the United States. The result is a potential loss of opportunities to improve the health and well-being of the people of both countries. A further example was the cancellation of the United States delegation to the eightieth anniversary celebration of the Pedro Kouri Institute of Tropical Medicine, a leading institution in the region of the Americas working on arboviral disease, dengue and tuberculosis, among other issues.

Health is a high priority for the Cuban Government, with public resources allocated to health exceeding 10 per cent of the gross domestic product. One consequence of the embargo is the loss of efficiency in the procurement of supplies, equipment and drugs directly from the United States.

In order to record and monitor the effects of the embargo on the health sector, Cuba's Ministry of Public Health meets with all national institutions that document and report on this impact (national hospitals, research institutes, among others), as well as provincial units and national working groups in different specialties. The Ministry has created permanent working groups on the impact of the embargo, through resolutions including Legal Decree 290 of the Council of Ministers, of 29 March 2012 and Law 80 on the Reaffirmation of Cuban Dignity and Sovereignty, of 24 December 1996.

In accordance with the working groups' reports, the negative impacts of the embargo are a result of the application of extraterritorial measures and political or other pressures exerted by the United States Government to hinder or impede Cuba's ability to engage in trade and economic transactions related to financial collaboration and investment, which obstruct access to technology or knowledge, affect production and services or result in other impediments.

It is important to point out that during 2017, the effects of the United States embargo on Cuban health sector show new types of negative impacts, in addition to those already identified in the previous report of the working group, which persist and are on the rise.

As a result, the Ministry of Public Health has had to allocate greater financial resources to provide alternative solutions, putting further financial constraints on its ability to import supplies. These additional costs amounted to several tens of millions of United States dollars during the period covered by this report. This has produced cost overruns for the procurement of medicines, equipment and medical supplies, as well as technology, including technology to expedite the development of eHealth and telemedicine. The embargo also imposes additional burdens on the development of the national health system by denying the sector the ability to enter into agreements with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Furthermore, access to philanthropic donations from civil society organizations in the United States and other countries is limited. The embargo has made it hard to publish scientific articles in important international journals because payment is impossible and Cuban scientists are barred from applying to participate in multi-centre research projects.

Impact on World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization technical cooperation

The impacts of the embargo on WHO/PAHO technical cooperation in Cuba are multiple and can be felt in different areas: financial transaction costs, purchases and procurement, participation in international meetings, organization of international meetings in Cuba and Cuba's participation in virtual discussions and training platforms, among others.

In 2017 there continued to be problems with repatriating funds from the WHO/PAHO country office in Cuba to the organization's headquarters in Washington, D.C. This situation has persisted since June 2015 when the previous attempt to solve the problem failed. The problem arose when banks refused to transfer funds to United States-based bank account of WHO/PAHO. In the case of Cuba, such transfers are supposed to be made when the balances in the bank accounts exceed the limits established by the WHO/PAHO and alternative channels specifically designed for Cuba are used, which take longer and incur additional and higher transaction costs. As a result, transfers must be made once a very high threshold of resources is achieved, creating losses, for example, in terms of interest lost due to immobilized funds.

At the beginning of 2018, new efforts were made to facilitate the repatriation of funds to WHO/PAHO headquarters, but so far they have been unsuccessful. Consequently, as at February 2018, WHO/PAHO has around $300,000 immobilized in the bank account of the WHO/PAHO country office in Cuba. This account does not accrue interest, which amounts to further losses. In addition, the approximate monthly average of immobilized funds in Cuba from April 2017 through March 2018 was almost $800,000, causing heavy financial losses for the organization in terms of interest and higher overhead costs, as shown in the following breakdown:

Withdrawal date	*Surplus cash in the account (United States dollars)*
29 March 2018	142 903.30
28 February 2018	393 211.05
31 January 2018	507 776.17
29 December 2017	615 112.04
30 November 2017	779 860.61
31 October 2017	1 018 778.13
30 September 2017	910 170.18
31 August 2017	986 178.31
31 July 2017	1 095 017.87
30 June 2017	1 216 988.04
31 May 2017	1 173 271.10
30 April 2017	704 608.90
Average	**795 322.98**

When analysing the effect of the embargo on WHO/PAHO technical cooperation in Cuba in regard to purchasing and procurement, it should be kept in mind that a high percentage of these funds are for the purchase of supplies and equipment in strategic areas. Prices and shipping costs are higher when it is necessary to resort to markets in Asia, Europe and Latin America instead of turning directly to the United States market. As for the procurement of drugs and technologies, the embargo impacts all equipment and supplies coming from the United States, which delays or prevents purchases, since special licences must be granted by the United States Department of the Treasury, which can take several months. An example of this was the procurement process for real-time testing equipment to be used at the Pedro Kouri Institute of Tropical Medicine.

Another particularly complex case involved WHO/PAHO support for the recovery of the health system in areas affected by Hurricane Irma. In an emergency situation, the need for immediate relief means supplies are flown in from Europe, which can cost up to five times as much as purchasing them in the United States. Another example is the loss of over $280,000 that could not be spent on buying supplies, because the funds from European donors would have expired before maritime transport could deliver them (any ship docking in Cuba must wait six months before entering a port in the United States). A final example of cost overruns caused by the embargo involved the cost of reagents, which rose from $14,000 for maritime freight to $37,000 by air.

The embargo also affects the participation of Cuban scientists and public health professionals in workshops, conferences and seminars that are held in the region and throughout the world. For example, United States visas are only issued for activities held in Washington, D.C., and people who wish to participate in meetings in other cities of the United States cannot get their visas in Havana, since the interviews are conducted in the United States embassy in Guyana. In 2017, a national consultant at the WHO/PAHO country office in Cuba could not attend a meeting of focal points in the human resources programme at WHO/PAHO headquarters because her visa was not issued in time, even though she had filed her application with the State Department in time. Plane tickets become unnecessarily expensive since they must be purchased with the greatest flexibility possible, given the uncertainty over passengers receiving their visas in time. This situation has grown worse in recent months. Indeed, WHO/PAHO consultants and some Cuban authorities have experienced problems getting visas to participate in WHO/PAHO activities in the United States.

Furthermore, hotel reservations cannot be confirmed for Cuban participants because they do not have valid credit cards in other countries and accounts with foreign banks are blocked, including those in the WHO/PAHO credit union. International civil servants cannot use credit cards issued by United States banks to pay for hotels in Cuba. It should be noted that 75 international civil servants carried out missions to Cuba during the period of this report (not counting those who attended seminars and conferences).

Another consequence of the embargo is increased costs in the local market of the organization of events, given Cuba's need to import many supplies from Latin America, Europe and Asia, rather than from the United States.

Cuba's participation in remote exchanges and distance learning has also been affected by the embargo. This is worrisome in particular because of the high number of WHO/PAHO collaborating centres in Cuba (10 in all) in fields ranging from genetics and endocrinology to the regulation of biomedical products and quality of care. Serious problems persist with technical cooperation in the country as a result of the incorporation of an online platform adopted by WHO/PAHO at the regional level. The platform does not offer services in Cuba and thus prevents the country's health institutions, including the Ministry of Public Health, from hosting virtual conferences and training provided by PAHO headquarters (for instance, through the PAHO Virtual Campus on Public Health) or by WHO, nor can they generate their own virtual cooperation meetings. The embargo creates general connectivity problems for the country, particularly in terms of supporting Cuban specialists who wish to participate in virtual events.

Furthermore, the WHO/PAHO country office in Cuba does not have access to the conditions for equipment procurement that other offices in the region enjoy, particularly for strategic purchases by PAHO headquarters to obtain good quality equipment at lower prices, thus maintaining the Organization's standards.

Other effects of the embargo on WHO/PAHO technical cooperation include:

- Knowledge management, as the main embargo-related problems are linked to the country's access to scientific information through tools such as CISCO, WebEx, Adobe (Digital Adobe Edition, Adobe Shockwave Player, Adobe Flash Player) and Java, among others;
- Problems in developing technical and scientific information, given that it is impossible to procure information resources from publishing houses in the United States and other countries, owing to restrictions on direct transactions with international banks. Some procurement has been done with support from headquarters since it cannot be done directly, which causes longer waiting times and higher costs.

World Intellectual Property Organization

[Original: English]
[23 May 2018]

As a result of the embargo, the circumstances that have been observed in Cuba and are an obstacle to the country's advancement in the field of intellectual property, and have a direct impact on its technology, social and economic development are outlined below:

By restricting the access of Cuban citizens to the United States of America, the embargo limits the possibilities of human resources development in the latter country. As a result, specialized Cuban professionals may not fully benefit from greater specialization opportunities in the field of intellectual property, especially those available in the United States. These include, notably, aspects of intellectual property asset and offices management, as well as the opportunity to become acquainted with successful experiences in the implementation of technology transfer offices, technology management, intellectual property valuation and intellectual property collateralization.

Visa restrictions also hinder the possibilities of Cuban intellectual property professionals to participate in regular training programmes, meetings and other events organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in the United States.

Restricted telecommunications infrastructure hinder the widespread dissemination of WIPO online distance learning courses in Cuba, despite the efforts and commitment of local authorities to foster a nationwide culture of respect for intellectual property. Videoconference facilities, which allow a most efficient, cost-effective means of communication, especially for educational and training purposes, are also unavailable, since a major portion of the necessary technical equipment and software tools, originating from the United States, may not be acquired.

Poor telecommunication facilities also have a negative impact on and obstruct the access of Cuban nationals to WIPO online databases and other digital services in the field of intellectual property. This situation, in particular the online access to global intellectual property databases, including Patentscope (patent information) and the Global Brand Database, are only available through the Internet, is detrimental to the advancement of technological research and other innovation programmes carried out by the Government of Cuba in the field of environmental, medical and life sciences, as well as bio- and nanotechnologies, and limits the possibility of learning about the behaviour of brands in potential export markets.

The embargo affects the availability of information technology equipment and software for the performance of administrative operations regarding filing and granting procedures, in particular patent and trademark searches and examination services. Although the country is administratively equipped to perform such functions owing to a capillary presence of provincial branches of the Cuban Industrial Property Office, the lack of specialized software critically hinders such performance. External procurement formalities to obtain the required equipment and software are extremely burdensome. The situation continues to cumulatively delay the delivery of services that these offices are required to render and prevents the normal growth and expansion of such services. Most importantly, this situation stifles the possibility of taking full advantage of the functionalities available under the WIPO intellectual property automated system, since some of the system's operating tools are not freely accessible for users in Cuba. As such, the possibilities of expansion and customization of the system to the needs of Cuban users (both in the capital and in the provinces) are seriously compromised.

The extraterritorial effects of the embargo extend to the financial arena as well. Payments from Cuba to WIPO under the WIPO-administered treaties (Patent Cooperation Treaty and the Madrid System) may be effected only in euros or Swiss francs, not in United States dollars, in order to avoid the restrictions imposed by the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control. Payments from WIPO to the Cuban Industrial Property Office must be made in the same currencies. The cost of those indirect transactions for the purpose of avoiding the United States banks amounts to considerable financial losses and discourages the use by Cuban nationals of the Patent Cooperation Treaty and Madrid Systems.

The financial implications of the embargo also extend to the payment of copyright royalties based on the rights granted by the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. A number of national banks cannot receive or send deposits from and to the collective management for the Cuban society of authors. Also, the exercise of rights based on said Convention through reciprocal representation agreements is not possible between the Cuban and United States collective management societies.

World Meteorological Organization

[Original: English]
[22 May 2018]

In the framework of the activities of the World Meteorological Organization regional office for the Americas, Cuba is very often present through its representatives in meetings, courses and workshops, as well as in projects covering the Caribbean area. Nevertheless, for certain activities, including the movement of equipment used for the exchange of meteorological or hydrological data, there are challenges due to the embargo, which consequently could have a negative effect on regional scientific collaboration.

World Tourism Organization

[Original: English]
[28 May 2018]

The effects of the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America on Cuba persists in general activities, including restrictions on United States citizens travel to Cuba, which has a direct effect on the Cuban tourism sector.

The new regulations imposed by the United States Departments of Treasury, of Commerce and of State issued on 8 November 2017, harden the embargo measures that can be found in the National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the policy of the United States Toward Cuba, signed by President Donald Trump on 16 June 2017. The above, along with the reduction of United States diplomats in Cuba, have consequently greatly affected commerce and tourism towards Cuba.

In 2017, international tourist arrivals worldwide grew by 6.8 per cent and tourist arrivals in the Caribbean subregion grew by 3.2 per cent, to 26 million. The United States, as one of the largest outbound markets worldwide, strongly contributes to this ongoing growth.

In terms of tourism promotion, Cuba cannot access United States advertising companies nor other promotion channels, making it more difficult to "sell" their destination, and their national tourism agency, in charge of servicing the United States market, is not allowed to have direct representation in the United States.

The embargo measures concerning e-commerce, Internet usage and United States credit card transactions as a means of payment for air ticket sales and tourist services continue to affect tourism operations in Cuba. The effects arise, in particular, as a result of the geographical relocation of the suppliers, all of which imply higher prices and higher transportation and insurance fees, owing to the long distance that needs to be covered by the supplier markets and also the non-mobility of resources to keep large stocks of merchandise. This also implies higher financial costs, because of the need to access more expensive commercial credit, compared to softer state and bank credit, which is difficult to obtain as a consequence of the pressure from the United States Government on third countries and because of the currency exchange rate variations, as the United States dollar cannot be used as purchasing currency.

Cuban tourism companies have had to face excess of costs linked to imports of products highly demanded by tourists, which had to be obtained through third countries. For instance, products such as food, special tourism equipment, technology, electrical materials, general hardware, computer equipment and construction materials are produced in the United States, however, as a result of the embargo they have to be bought from third countries.

In all, international and domestic tourism in Cuba from April 2017 to March 2018 has continued to experience severe shortcomings caused by the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States Government in important areas related to operations and crucial logistical services for the tourism sector, which amounted to an estimate that could reach US$ 1.1 billion.

World Trade Organization

[Original: English]
[29 May 2018]

The issue referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/4 was raised in the context of Cuba's first annual report on a waiver extension granted under a decision of 12 December 2016.[12] This waiver was granted to Cuba under the decision of 14 October 1996,[13] in relation to Article XV:6 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994. In the aforementioned annual report, Cuba mentions, inter alia, that the embargo continued during 2016 and 2017 and that there has been a tightening of measures within the financial sector over the recent years. Moreover, it states that although the previous United States Administration allowed the use of the United States dollar in international financial transactions, in practice very few commercial transactions were conducted in that currency due to lingering fears of reprisals. Moreover, Cuba argues that the embargo policy raised financial costs and increased difficulties in financing essential imports, hindering its ambition to integrate into the world trading system.

The matter was also raised by First Deputy Minister Antonio Luis Carricarte in Cuba's statement at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017.[14] It was mentioned that the embargo is the greatest obstacle to Cuba's development and to its economic, commercial and financial relations with the rest of the world.

IV. Replies received from entities and organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly

South Centre

[Original: English]
[30 May 2018]

On 1 November 2017, the 193 States Members of the United Nations gathered for the twenty-sixth consecutive annual vote of the General Assembly on a resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The resolution was adopted with a near unanimous vote of 191 votes in favour and two against (United States of America and Israel).[15]

The adoption in 2017 of new coercive measures and the reversal of other policies that had been put in place by the previous United States Administration have resulted in a tightening of the blockade against Cuba in the areas of travel and trade and marked the return to a policy of isolating Cuba with severe effects on its people. The embargo causes undeniable obstacles to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development which calls for global cooperation to leave no one behind.

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[12] See World Trade Organization, document WT/L/1023.

[13] See World Trade Organization, document WT/L/182.

[14] See World Trade Organization, document WT/MIN(17)/ST/91.

[15] In 2016, the resolution was adopted for the first time ever with 191 votes in favour, none against and two abstentions (United States of America and Israel). See "As United States, Israel Abstain from Vote for First Time, General Assembly Adopts Annual Resolution Calling for Lifting of United States Embargo on Cuba", GA/11846, 26 October 2016. Available at https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11846.doc.htm.

The General Assembly resolution that was adopted in November 2017 reiterated and reflected previous resolutions, reports and declarations adopted at the United Nations and other intergovernmental forums and bodies rejecting the use of unilateral coercive measures such as trade sanctions in the form of embargoes and the interruption of financial and investment flows between sender and target countries, such as the United States embargo on Cuba. Such measures have had negative effects on the full enjoyment of human rights of people of the countries concerned, in particular the most vulnerable groups, including women, the elderly and children. Such measures have also adversely affected the ability of the countries under sanctions to contribute to international development cooperation, such as in the case of Cuba and its well-known healthcare cooperation.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/4, reaffirmed the commitment of Member States to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and called upon all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures such as the embargo imposed against Cuba, contrary to international law and the principles of sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation. For over two decades, the United States has applied the Helms-Burton Act (12 March 1996), the application of which has extraterritorial effects adversely impacting Cuba's trade and international cooperation arrangements. This is a continuation of the embargo imposed against Cuba for nearly six decades,[16] which has been counterproductive and caused enormous social, economic and trade losses to the people of Cuba.

General Assembly resolution 72/4 recalled the statements of the Heads of State or Government of the Latin American and Caribbean Region at the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States which unanimously called for the need to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

In the light of the concerns expressed above, the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 72/4, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations system, to prepare a report on the implementation of the resolution in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to submit it to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. Over the years, the annual report of the Secretary-General has become an important platform for highlighting the adverse impact of the United States embargo on Cuba and reaffirming the almost universal call for its end. The report provides a clear picture of the impact of the unilateral coercive measures of the United States embargo against Cuba and the consequences for the Cuban people and around the world, with contributions from Member States, organs and agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, some of them working on the ground in Cuba, such as the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The South Centre is the intergovernmental organization of developing countries established in 1995 pursuant to the Agreement to Establish the South Centre deposited with the United Nations following the recommendations of the report entitled "The Challenge to the South". The report was prepared by the South Commission and its outcomes were considered by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/155. The South Centre holds observer status at the General Assembly and currently has 54 member States, including Cuba. The Centre supports developing countries in promoting and advancing their common interests in the international arena towards fair and inclusive development for all. The Centre also pursues policy research on the various international policy areas that are relevant to the promotion of the development needs of developing countries and their efforts towards the strengthening of the United Nations system and of multilateralism.

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[16] President John F. Kennedy proclaimed an embargo on trade between the United States and Cuba in February 1962. Presidential Proclamation 3447, available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-76/pdf/STATUTE-76-Pg1446.pdf.

The tightening of unilateral coercive economic measures against Cuba by the present United States Administration, after the positive strides made under the previous United States Administration to normalize relations, is contrary to the sentiment of the international community as seen in the vote on General Assembly resolution 72/4. The international community has called for an end to unilateral policies that have caused, and continue to cause, severe socioeconomic hardship on the Cuban people. From April 2016 to April 2017, losses caused by the blockade to the Cuban economy were estimated at $4 billion according to Cuban Government figures. "There is not a Cuban family or social service that has not suffered the deprivations resulting from the blockade," said Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla when introducing the text of the resolution on 1 November 2017 at the General Assembly.[17]

The impacts of the embargo continue to be felt by the Cuban people. For example, an Amnesty International paper released in 2009, entitled "The United States embargo against Cuba — its impact on economic and social rights" highlighted the negative impacts of the embargo, particularly on vulnerable groups, and called for a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken on an annual basis by the United States. Recent decisions of the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) highlight the extent to which the embargo remains in place against Cuba, with third countries, their companies and banks being subjected to the payment of large fines because they have maintained trade and finance relations with Cuba. From 2009 to 2016, a total of 49 fines have been imposed by OFAC, owing to violations of the embargo. From April 2016 to April 2017, Cuba was negatively affected by the application of the blockade policy, in particular its extraterritorial character, against more than 100 foreign banks. Some of the most recent examples as reported in 2017 by the Government of Cuba include:

- On 12 January 2017, OFAC imposed a $10,000 fine on the Alliance for a Responsible Cuba Policy Foundation, as well as on an individual, for engaging in transactions and offering non-authorized services to 20 persons in relation to two trips to Cuba in 2010 and 2011.
- On 13 January 2017, OFAC imposed a $516,105 fine on the Canadian bank Toronto-Dominion and its branch offices Internaxx Bank and TD Waterhouse Investor Services (Europe). OFAC claimed that, between the years 2007 and 2011, the banking institution had processed 29 transactions associated with Cuba that had gone through the United States banking system.
- On 2 March 2017, the branch office of the French bank BNP-Paribas in Belgium refused to process a euro transfer from the Cuban embassy in Spain addressed to the European company Forax, claiming international restrictions on the acceptance of operations on behalf of Cuba. The purpose of the transfer was to pay the fuel bill of the Cuban mission.
- On 11 April 2017, the United States company Amazon closed the bank accounts of the staff of the Cuban Permanent Mission to the United Nations, claiming that the company did so to abide by United States regulations.

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[17] Statement made by the representative of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla, at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.38).

- In May 2017, ING, a bank headquartered in the Netherlands, refused to accept Cuba's payment of its quota as a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, which is based in Brussels. In an attempt to justify the refusal, the managerial staff of the Dutch bank claimed that Cuba was a country subject to OFAC sanctions.
- In July 2017, American International Group, a global insurance and financial services company, agreed to pay OFAC $148,698 to settle potential civil liability for 555 "apparent violations" of the OFAC sanctions programme for insuring Iran, Sudan and Cuba shipments. According to the OFAC settlement agreement, from November 2007 to September 2012 AIG engaged in a total of 555 transactions totalling approximately $396,530 in premiums and claims for the insurance of maritime shipments of various goods and materials that were destined for, or transited through, Iran, Sudan or Cuba and/or that involved a blocked person.[18]

The blockade violates the rights of the Cuban people in the most sensitive social sectors. Some of the examples showing the negative impacts caused by this policy in the health sector during the period of reference include the following:

Impacts on the right to health and life

Cuban hospitals cannot have any state-of-the-art technology or equipment that is exclusively manufactured in the United States to treat certain pathologies. For that reason, and with the purpose of ensuring that every citizen, without any distinction, has universal, free and quality access to health services, Cuba had to send a group of patients and their companions to foreign hospitals, at a cost of $1,066,600. These technologies could have been imported from the United States, had it not been for the blockade, and those patients could have been treated in their home country.

In February 2017, the German company Otto Bock HealthCare, a supplier of orthopaedic prosthesis, announced that, as a result of the blockade, it would not be able to supply the lower limbs prosthetic components requested by MediCuba. As a result, a similar product but of lower quality was purchased. The modern prostheses manufactured by the Otto Bock company significantly improve the possibilities for persons whose lower limbs have been amputated to preserve or recover their mobility, which would considerably improve the quality of life of Cuban patients with lower limb amputations.

On 17 March 2017, MediCuba was notified by the Spanish company Lindmed Trade that it would not be able to supply the injectable antibiotic Ciprofloxacin lactate (200 mg) because the manufacturer, Claris Otsuka, refused to sell the pharmaceutical claiming that Cuba was subject to the OFAC sanctions, therefore the company could not supply any product, whether directly or indirectly. This broad-spectrum antibiotic, which is administered intravenously to paediatric and adult patients who need to be hospitalized to undergo treatment for infections of the respiratory tract, skin, soft tissue, bone and joints caused by sensitive bacteria, cannot be used in Cuban hospitals.

In April 2017, the German supplier Eckert and Ziegler Radiopharma refused to supply a Ge-68/Ga-68 Gallia Pharm generator and its components to MediCub. This equipment is used to diagnose prostate cancer. According to Eckert and Ziegler Radiopharma, this company could not supply the product to Cuba either directly or through a third country because of the blockade.

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[18] Jaclyn Jaeger, "OFAC fines AIG for insuring Iran, Sudan, and Cuba shipments," 3 July 2017. Available at https://www.complianceweek.com/blogs/enforcement-action/ofac-fines-aig-for-insuring-iran-sudan-and-cuba-shipments#.WwFOKS-Q3BI.

The anatomical pathology department of the surgical clinical hospital Hermanos Ameijeiras, a national reference hospital that performs highly complex diagnosis, finds it indispensable to have a high-precision electron microscope for its work. At present, this hospital has a Hitachi microscope but it has been impossible to repair it, because more than 80 per cent of its components are manufactured in the United States. This situation was corroborated during a visit paid to the hospital by the executives of the Hitachi company in September 2016.

The Cuban biopharmaceutical industry has also been affected by the implementation of the blockade. One example of the negative effects of this policy involved the importing and exporting company FARMACUBA, which has faced difficulties in its negotiations with the Korean company Sejong Pharmatech, for the import of tablet-coating equipment, of great importance for the pharmaceutical industry. Owing to the restrictions imposed by the blockade, it was necessary to re-route the purchase of the equipment through a European intermediary bank, which incurred an additional cost of $250,000.

Despite the hardship of the embargo, which impedes significant development, Cuba has achieved an exemplar model of health systems and research, which could serve as a model for many countries and an element of international cooperation. The World Health Organization recently certified that Cuba had officially become the first country in the world to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis. Cuba's success is a step in the right direction to reduce the global threat of HIV/AIDS, as called for in the Sustainable Development Goals.[19]

Impacts on international cooperation

The blockade creates difficulties for developing Cuba's full capacity of international cooperation, both as a recipient and contributor. Cuba's cooperation on health and disaster response with other countries for instance, is a good example. The well-known and globally recognized work of Cuban doctors after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the Ebola virus outbreak in Liberia in 2014 are two great examples. The Caribbean island, despite all the difficulties it itself is facing, was the first in line to provide not merely financial assistance, but to send its own highly trained medical professionals into disaster zones in the global South. Countries willing to cooperate with Cuba also suffer from difficulties in effecting financial transactions with respect to their activities with Cuba.

As a Caribbean island, Cuba is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. In the aftermath of the devastating 2017 hurricane season, it has sent 750 doctors and medical professionals to other Caribbean islands to assist with rescue efforts. Cuba is one of the countries that contributes the least to CO_2 emissions, which led to this phenomenon, yet the island suffers annually during the hurricane season from July to September, which is increasingly becoming powerful and severely destructive to the region, wiping away decades of efforts to achieve development and leaving nations completely destroyed. In September 2017, Hurricane Irma, a category 5 hurricane, barrelled through the central and western provinces, causing catastrophic destruction with severe flooding; hundreds of thousands of people have been affected.

The Havana Times stated that the embargo will make rebuilding efforts and government purchases of building materials both extremely burdensome and costly because multinationals that trade with the United States are prohibited from selling to Cuba. Under the United States embargo, the island nation is also prohibited from joining the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which grant crucial infrastructure loans.[20]

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[19] "Cuba eliminates mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Aids", United Nations Web TV, 27 March 2017. Available from http://webtv.un.org/news-features/watch/cuba-eliminates-motherto-child-transmission-of-hiv-and-aids-/5374392704001#full-text.

Impact on the right to food

The economic, commercial and financial blockade applied by the United States has impaired the development of the agricultural and food processing sectors over the past six decades, as a result of impediments in trade, financial credits, investments, access to technology and building of human capacity through academic exchanges between the two countries. According to the Cuban Government, the food industry sector had been negatively impacted with a total of $347 million from April 2016 to June 2017. According to Cuban government figures, the companies that manufacture food products are forced to import approximately 70 per cent of their raw materials from different markets because they cannot buy from the United States market as a result of the blockade.

United States agriculture and farming processing associations have united in a powerful coalition to request that Congress end the blockade and the normalization of agricultural trade between the two countries, currently possible only with cash payments.[21] Financial transactions and shipping impediments raise the costs for other countries to export to Cuba. For example, the modern deep-water port of Mariel, a result of a modernization project financed by Brazil which aims to create a special economic zone centred around the port, cannot be used because, under United States sanctions, any ship that docks in Cuba cannot enter the United States for six months unless it has a United States waiver.[22] This has considerably increased the costs of imports to the Caribbean island, only 90 miles away from Miami. The Cuban companies responsible for manufacturing food products in the country are forced to import approximately 70 per cent of their raw materials from different markets, namely Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, India, Italy, Mexico and Spain. Moreover, so far, as a result of the blockade, Cuba has not been allowed to buy from the United States market, which happens to be very attractive, given its prices and its proximity to Cuba. That market also has a varied offer of raw materials, equipment and materials necessary to modernize production lines. Such purchases could also contribute to a significant reduction of inventories which, for obvious reasons, need to be maintained, imposing immobilization of capital.

Impact on the right to education

The blockade imposed by the United States affects the Cuban programmes aimed at ensuring quality, universal and free education at all levels. During the period covered by this report, the educational sector in Cuba has reported losses estimated at US2,832,830. These losses were mostly associated with an increase in freight rates for the import of school supplies from third countries since it is impossible to buy them in the United States.

Cuba imported 590 containers from China with most of the school supplies necessary for the current academic year. The freight cost of 20-cubic feet containers amounts to approximately $3,200, while the freight cost of 40-cubic feet containers is, on average, $5,200. Travelling from the United States, these same containers would cost approximately $1,300 and $2,000, respectively. Every year, Cuba has to incur very high costs to be able to guarantee the school supplies necessary for education, owing to the high freight costs.

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[20] Rebecca Bodenheimer, "Cuba's response to Hurricane Irma puts 'America first-ism' to shame", 20 September 2017. Available at https://www.havanatimes.org/?p=127421.

[21] United States Agriculture Coalition for Cuba. Available at http://www.usagcoalition.com.

[22] Tim Johnson, "U.S.-Cuba diplomatic thaw puts Mariel port back in spotlight", 21 January 2015. Available at http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article[illegible].html.

In the case of higher education system, the application of the blockade has brought about a host of difficulties that have impaired Cuba's access to the necessary technology and equipment for teaching; scientific research; dissemination of information; adequate remuneration of results; and acquisition of school supplies, means and tools, as well as universities' extension work and local development.

For years, the Cuban and Puerto Rican universities have had academic exchanges. However, as a result of the application of the blockade, Puerto Rican students are not allowed to come to Cuba to pursue a traineeship at Cuban universities. The University of Pinar del Río, just to mention one example, estimated, using conservative figures, that around 150 students could undergo traineeship in that university at an average cost of $ 00 a day. As a result of the blockade, the revenues foregone by that university in this field amounted to $30,000 which could have been invested in its development.

The higher education system could have saved $112,000 if it had been able to import 96 containers of materials for all of the universities in the country from the port of Miami. However, as a result of the blockade, it was forced to import those products from European and Chinese ports. The cost of 64 containers imported from China was $102,400; and the cost of 32 containers imported from Europe was $131,200. If these containers had been brought from Miami, each container would have cost only $200.

Impact on financial transactions

In January 2017, the United States Treasury fined the Canadian bank Toronto-Dominion US$ 955,750 for violating the regulations of the blockade imposed against Cuba. According to OFAC, the Canadian bank made transactions through the United States financial system on behalf of a Canadian company owned by a Cuban company, which included the financing of commercial activities which are also banned by the blockade.

In March 2017, the Nicaraguan private capital bank Banco Corporativo refused to open a bank account on behalf of the Cubana de Aviación office based in that country. The managerial staff of the bank explained that they could not complete the operation because Cubana de Aviación had been included in the list of countries, organizations or persons they were not allowed to do business or make transactions with, according to the OFAC list of specially designated nationals; otherwise the bank would be fined.

Since 2015, the United Bank of Switzerland has been rejecting all the deposits made by Cuban institutions for the payment of Cuba's quotas as a member of the United Nations Environment Programme and its Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. This situation has prevented Cuba from honouring its financial commitments in a timely manner. For that reason, since 2016, Cuba has not been eligible for technical cooperation projects or actions under the Conventions of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm, associated with the safe management of chemicals and hazardous waste.

A Cuban bank reported that the Pan-American Health Organization had not been able to transfer revenues to an account it owned at a banking institution of a third country, despite having a general licence issued by OFAC authorizing this type of transaction. This action evidences the extraterritorial character of the financial blockade.

The blockade violates international law with its extraterritorial implementation.

On 7 October 2016, the Swiss bank UBS refused to accept a transfer of 20,000 Swiss francs from Cuba for the payment of the annual contribution of the National People's Power Assembly of Cuba to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, headquartered in Geneva.

On 10 April 2017, the Canadian subsidiary of the United States company Expedia interrupted negotiations with the travel agency Hola Sun, the representative of the company Havanatur in Canada, aimed at implementing an agreement to sell air tickets to travel to Cuba. Expedia claimed that the inclusion of Hola Sun in the OFAC Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List prevented the materialization of the agreement.

The Center of Molecular Immunology reports that the Malaysian company Inno Biologics has outstanding payments amounting to $150,000, because this foreign company has been unable to transfer funds to Cuba as a result of the blockade. Other banks like Maybank and Public Bank have been consulted about the possibility of opening bank accounts that will make it possible to transfer funds to Cuba, but to no avail.

The Central Medical Cooperation Unit of Cuba reported that during the period covered by this report, it has faced difficulties with financial banks in Djibouti and Uganda related to the processing of transfers for the payment of the medical services that Cuba offers to those countries. The African banks have correspondent banks in the United States, and therefore they claim that, as a result of the blockade regulations, it is very likely that these funds will be blocked before they reach their destination.

On 19 December 2016, a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Canada in the Bahamas refused to process a transfer sent by four Cuban medical doctors who were offering cooperation in that country to a Scotiabank bank account (also in the Bahamas), because of the restrictions imposed by the United States blockade against Cuba.

In March 2017, the Cuban embassy in Italy reported that the Food and Agriculture Organization had been having difficulties buying computers destined to a food security project which included Google Earth technologies, only for being linked to and having as their final destination Cuba.

On 15 March 2017, it transpired that the subsidiary of the Canadian bank Scotiabank in Antigua and Barbuda refused to allow the Cuban cooperation staff working in that country to change the local currency into United States dollars and vice versa, or withdraw money in Cuba using the debit cards issued by that bank. Likewise, that banking institution refused to open private bank accounts or issue debit cards for members of the Cuban embassy staff. The reason given was the fact that Cuba is a country under United States sanctions and banking transactions had to go through United States banks.

On 31 January 2017, at the twenty-eighth African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, for the eighth consecutive time, the Heads of State and Government called for the lifting of the United States blockade against Cuba. The Declaration of the fifth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Caribbean Community and the Republic of Cuba, adopted on 11 March 2017, reiterated the call on the United States to put an end, without preconditions, to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba for more than five decades. The text expresses deep concern for and rejection of the extraterritorial dimension of the blockade.

The embargo not only affects the Cuban people and Cuban commercial and financial transactions, but also the South-South cooperation initiatives that Cuba has been undertaking for decades. Cuba's emergency medical assistance response to the African countries affected by the Ebola crisis in West Africa was recognized worldwide and is a great example of solidarity with the international community. Cuban assistance in addressing the health crisis would have been more extensive were it not for the embargo. The permanent lifting of the embargo will allow Cuba to cooperate more with other developing countries on health, education, environment and agriculture, among other issues. Both developing and developed countries could greatly benefit from Cuba's outstanding experience in biotechnology, for example.

United Nations entities would also benefit from cooperating with Cuban experts on their projects more frequently, considering that in most cases, difficulties resulting from the embargo make it more complicated for the United Nations to recruit Cuban experts, as has been explained by several United Nations entities in previous reports, owing to several complications ranging from issues with payment to travel permits.

The States members of the European Union have strongly condemned the embargo. The European Union delegation has stated that United States legislation, such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, extended the effects of the United States embargo to third-party countries. In the framework of the common commercial policy, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures. A new chapter in European Union-Cuba relations began in December 2016, with the signature of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement in Brussels.

At the 18th Midterm Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, in April 2018, the Ministers of more than 120 countries and several observer States and international organizations, including the South Centre, deplored the United States embargo against Cuba. In the final outcome document, paragraph 557, the Ministers, while welcoming the historic decision of the former Presidents of Cuba and the United States to re-establish diplomatic relations, at the same time regretted the measures implemented by the current United States Administration that have strengthened the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and entailed a setback in the process of normalization of the bilateral relations.

The Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement once again reiterated their call to the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which constitutes the major impediment for its full development. They also urged the President of the United States to use his broad executive powers to substantially modify the embargo which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and to the principle of good-neighbourliness, is causing huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba. They once again urged strict compliance with General Assembly resolutions 47/19, 48/16, 49/9, 50/10, 51/17, 52/10, 53/4, 54/21, 55/20, 56/9, 57/11, 58/7, 59/11, 60/12, 61/11, 62/3, 63/7, 64/6, 65/6, 66/6, 67/4, 68/8, 69/5, 70/5, 71/5 and 72/4, and adherence to the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention as enshrined in the Charter. They expressed deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba and rejected the reinforcement of the financial measures adopted by the Government of the United States, aimed at tightening the embargo.

The Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 and China, the largest group of developing countries, at their forty-first annual ministerial meeting, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2017, reaffirmed once more their strong objection to such measures. In paragraph 203 of the adopted declaration, the

Ministers of the Group of 77 and China expressed their strong rejection of the implementation of unilateral coercive measures and reiterated their solidarity with Cuba. The Ministers also reaffirmed their call on the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on that sisterly nation for almost six decades, which constitutes the major impediment for its full development. At the same time, the Ministers regretted the measures announced by the Government of the United States on 16 June 2017, which strengthen the blockade against Cuba.

The Ministers of the Group of 77 and China called upon the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.

The Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in the context of the meeting of the General Assembly to vote on resolution 72/4, on 1 November 2017, said that the group regrets that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States 55 years earlier against Cuba remained in full force and continued to be strengthened. While recalling the positive steps taken by the former United States Administration between 2015 and 2016, "which were still inadequate to effectively end the impact of the embargo, but were focused in the right direction", the Group regretted the new policy established by the current President of the United States aimed at strengthening the embargo against Cuba. It is a setback in the process of achieving normalized relations between both countries.[23]

The representative of the European Union, in explanation of its vote in favour, also said that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba had a damaging impact on the economic situation of the country and negatively affected the living standards of the Cuban people. The European Union representative said that the recovery and reconstruction after the devastation wrought by Hurricane Irma could also be hampered because of the blockade. The European Union was of the view that external trade and foreign investment would play a crucial role in setting Cuba on a path towards sustainable growth, and therefore, considered that lifting the embargo could facilitate the opening of the Cuban economy to the benefit of the Cuban people. The European Union deeply regretted that the new United States Administration had announced its intention to reintroduce restrictions on United States relations with Cuba: the proposals to restrain individual self-directed travel would not only curtail the possibility for engagement with the Cuban people, but would also hit Cuba's burgeoning private sector, which had benefited the most from such individual visits. The European Union representative also stated that beyond the damaging impact of the embargo on ordinary Cubans, unilateral United States sanctions and other unilateral administrative and judicial measures were also negatively affecting European Union economic interests and that the European Union firmly and continuously opposed any such measures, owing to their extraterritorial impact on it, in violation of commonly accepted rules of international trade. The representative of the European Union said that its member States could not accept unilaterally imposed measures that impeded their economic and commercial relations with Cuba and that the European Union Council of Ministers therefore adopted a regulation and a joint action to protect against undue interference and problems for European Union citizens, businesses and non-governmental organizations residing, working or operating in Cuba.[24]

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[23] Statement made by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of 77, Diego Morejón Pazmiño (see A/72/PV.38).

[24] Statement made by the representative of Estonia, on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.38).

Several outcomes of United Nations conferences and other forums adopted between June 2015 and May 2017 have also rejected the use of unilateral coercive measures, including the United States embargo on Cuba. For example, in September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by consensus in General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". In paragraph 30 thereof, it is stressed that "States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries".

Furthermore, a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of all the unilateral coercive measures currently being applied on the enjoyment and achievement of human rights would be an important initiative. This is particularly important in relation to assessing the impact of such measures on the human rights of people living in affected countries, particularly on women, the elderly and children, who are too often the main victims of such measures, as is the case with the prohibition regarding access to medicines and technology for the production of medicines in Cuba and in the Islamic Republic of Iran, two countries affected by an embargo by the United States.

The United Nations would be best placed to make such an analysis and assessment on a more regular and substantial basis. In this regard, the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights by the Human Rights Council, in accordance with its resolution 27/21, is an important achievement.[25] In the resolution, the Council also mandated the conduct of a biannual panel discussion on the issue of unilateral coercive measures and human rights. The visit of the Special Rapporteur to Sudan has produced important results contributing to the process that led the United States to revisit its policy against the African country. He will be visiting Cuba in 2018.

In 2017, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, visited Cuba from 10 to 14 April and the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Virginia Dandan, visited Cuba from 10 to 14 July to study the ways in which Cuba and the Cuban people acted in solidarity with States and peoples around the world. The visit was aimed at examining, in practical terms, how Cuba was delivering the elements of international solidarity and to explore the elements of international solidarity — first the preventive or proactive policies and actions, for example how the country is addressing global challenges and promoting human rights, and second, the action taken to address crises such as humanitarian response to disasters.[26]

The South Centre is of the view that the embargo on Cuba has had an adverse impact on the economic growth and development of Cuba and its population. As largely reported in this report, the embargo also affects the full potential of Cuba to be a more active actor in international trade and development and international cooperation. The South Centre calls for the end of the embargo against Cuba as soon as possible, consistent with the Charter, the respect for international law and the worldwide call made by the General Assembly and all developing countries.

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[25] For more details, see http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/UCM/Pages/SRCoerciveMeasures.aspx.

[26] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, "UN rights expert to assess Cuba's practices on international cooperation and solidarity", 7 July 2017. Available from http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21853&LangID=E.